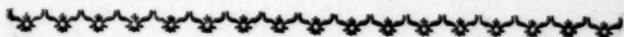


Anne Greaves



THE
OLD MAID.
IN
THREE VOLUMES.



VOL. II.



THE
OLD MAID;
OR,
HISTORY
OF
Miss RAVENSWORTH.
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY MRS. SKINN,
Late Miss MASTERMAN, of YORK.

If any here chance to behold himself,
Let him not dare to challenge me of wrong;
For if he shame to have his follies known,
First he shou'd shame to act 'em.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N,
Printed for J. BELL, at his Circulating-Library,
near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand;
and C. ETHERINGTON, at York.
MDCCLXXI.

THE
OLD M A I D
OR
HISTO R Y
OF
THE RAVENSWORTH
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS



VOLUME THE SECOND

L O N D O N

Printed for J. B. at his Clerical Library,
near Rotten Row, in the Strand,
and C. Hannington, at York.

MDCCLXXI

THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XXIV.

Miss DANBY to Miss SEAGROVE.

COMFORT! oh! my sweet HEN-
NY, where shall I find comfort for
myself, or for the poor distressed Mrs.
CLAYTON, or the half distracted RAVENS-
WORTH? — She is gone, my friend; the
detested villain has suspected our scheme,
and removed her from us, perhaps, for ever.

VOL. II.

B

They

They all set out for his country seat, in the manner, and at the time I told you ; but they found no one there but an old woman, who told them, that lord WILTON had not been at his seat of two months : but upon their enquiry about him, at a publick house, about a mile off, they said, That a carriage, which they knew to be lord WILTON's, had that morning passed by their house, with himself and a young lady in it, who tried to put down the window ; when he attempted to oppose her in it, she smashed the glass in pieces, and called loudly out for help : but as they knew lord WILTON to be a desperate man, they durst not offer her any assistance ; neither, had their inclinations been such, was it in their power, for the chaise drove with such swiftness, they could not overtake it.--Oh ! HENNY, exists there such another villain ? —Where can he have conveyed this sweet girl ? —What violence may he not make use of ? or to what lengths may he not drive her ?

Mrs. CLAYTON suffers a double share of affliction ; she is distressed for her young friend, and made wretched by a bad husband.

They were upon a visit together yesterday, both her and Mr. CLAYTON ; when the lady of the house, upon some occasion, sent in for her own maid, a very pretty and genteel young woman ; who the moment she entered, and cast her eyes on Mr. CLAYTON, fainted away, exclaiming as she fell, Oh ! CLAYTON, you have undone me.

Imagine how agreeable a scene this must be for a fond wife. — He stood without motion. The lady of the house assisted her servant, and Mrs. CLAYTON was not backward in offering every relief in her power. When the young woman came to herself, she appeared extremely confused ; asked pardon for the trouble she had given them, and begged leave to quit the room : a request which was immediately complied with.

Mr. CLAYTON, soon afterwards, pleaded an engagement, and left the two ladies

4 THE HISTORY OF

by themselves. After he was gone, his wife desired to be informed, Who the woman was, and what made her so particularly mention her husband ?

The other assured her, That she was quite ignorant of the history of her servant, who was recommended to her by Mrs. EGRET, the milliner, as a sober, discreet young girl ; and such she had ever found her : but, if Mrs. CLAYTON wanted any further information, she would oblige her to come down, and satisfy her curiosity.

A bow of assent from that lady, caused an immediate summons for the unfortunate girl ; who once more made her appearance, tho' hardly able to support herself.

Come hither, child, said Mrs. CLAYTON, in an encouraging voice, you seem to be very ill ; sit down by me, and tell me the cause of this sudden disorder ; depend upon my friendship, if I can be of any service to you. Yes, NANCY, says
her

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 3

her mistress, this lady is the wife of Mr. CLAYTON ; and your unguarded behaviour, upon the account of that gentleman, gives us room to suppose, there is something more than common in your present indisposition : sit down, my good girl, and tell us the whole truth ; depend upon it, you shall be no sufferer by a candid confession.

Oh ! ma'am, says the unhappy girl, is Mr. CLAYTON then married ? Indeed, I did not know he was. — I have been much to blame ; but did not know I was injuring any but myself. — Can you, says she — kneeling at Mrs. CLAYTON's feet — can you forgive a miserable wretch, who will soon die a martyr to a guilty passion, which has made her wretched for these four years ; while you, I hope, will live happy in a virtuous inclination ; a happiness I can never enjoy, as I have long since forfeited all title to it.

For heaven's sake, said Mrs. CLAYTON, drowned in tears, rise my good girl, since

6 THE HISTORY OF

it is I who ought to beg forgiveness, for having hindered him, tho' unknowingly, from doing you that justice, you had, I am sure, so great a right to expect. I am not a woman of that tyrannical virtue, who condemn all that part of my sex, unhappy enough one time in their life, to deviate from its paths. I think, by your appearance, you were not born to be a servant; and you seem to be possessed of that innate modesty, which would not easily be seduced. Tell me your story, my dear; I am convinced I shall not find myself deceived in you; and believe me, I shall make your afflictions my own.

After a short pause, the young lady (for such she was) rose up, and addressing herself to Mrs. CLAYTON, thanked her in the most grateful terms for her indulgence; and said, That after she had given an impartial account of her sad story, she hoped she should not forfeit all title to the pity of so amiable a lady.

She

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 9

She then told them, That she was the daughter of a clergyman, possessed of a good benefice, and the most indulgent of parents. Her name she would tell them, but begged, for the sake of her family, it might go no further, was DANVERS. That Mr. CLAYTON often visited a family in their neighbourhood; and she had frequently seen him at church. She said, she could not help being rather prepossessed in his favour, at first sight; and his eyes seemed to tell her, she was not indifferent to him. That, at last, he came with the family he was visiting to their house; and being once introduced, he made his visits pretty frequent; losing no opportunity to convince her of the sincerity of his love, and pretending it in honourable terms.

That after some time, he one day, one fatal day, persuaded her to receive him privately in her bed-room, which was on a ground-floor. As they had so few opportunities of talking together without wit-

THE HISTORY OF

nesses, and as he had given her many plausible reasons for not yet breaking his passion to her father; that she loved; too readily believed every thing he said, and admitted him as he desired.

He behaved, she said, with great reserve and decency for many nights; which gave her so high an opinion of his honour, as by a too great security to put her off her guard. It was needless to mention the many oaths of constancy and honour which he swore; as this kind of perjury was but too common, to be attended to by any but a woman whose every sense was lulled asleep by love. That he one night took her by surprize, and by a promise of immediate marriage, conquered her every scruple, and plunged her at once to infamy and to shame.

After this, all her prayers and intreaties could not persuade him to keep his word, and ask her in marriage of her father; he always finding some delay or
other,

other, to impede the completion of his promise, till she grew big with child : and then, the fear and dread of being found to be in such a situation, obliged her to fly with him to London, where she was soon after delivered of a child ; which, from the anxieties and misery she had suffered, during her pregnancy, soon took convulsions and died.

He lived with her after this for a year ; always promising to marry her, when his father died. But she soon after perceived a great coolness and alteration in his behaviour ; and he at last told her, that he would supply her with whatever money she wanted, but it was not possible he should ever see her more.

To so cruel a speech, she says, she does not know what answer she returned, as she fell into a state of insensibility, from which she never recovered during three months ; at the end of which time, she began to grow rather better. But her long illness,

ness, and other necessaries, took all her ready money; and she should have been greatly distressed, as she heard no further from him, but the person she lodged with, being a milliner, and a good sort of woman, pitying her unhappy state, told her she wanted a journeywoman, and would, if she chose, employ her in that capacity.

This offer she joyfully accepted; and continued to live as happy as the bitterness of her reflections on past misfortunes would permit her; when her tranquillity was again interrupted by a customer of her mistress's, one lord WILTON, who took it into his head to shock her ears with the most horrid proposals. Her refusals, and detestation of him, were to no purpose; he still teized her, and, at last, forcibly attempted to carry her off, when she had been with some band-boxes to a lady: he seized her, and was dragging her to a coach, which was in waiting, when her cries brought to her succour a young gentleman

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 11

gentleman passing that way, (who was not to be deceived, with the populace, into a belief of her being his wife) who rescued, and conducted her safe to the friendly milliner's. But she finding it no longer safe to keep her in the shop, recommended her as a servant to the lady she was then with.

This, my dear, is the sum of Miss DANVERS's story. Mrs. CLAYTON was much affected by it, and tenderly embracing her, promised to befriend and protect her. She is determined to see, if she can effect a reconciliation with the young lady's friends. In the mean time, her behaviour to her husband is truly philosophic. She is sorry she ever married him on the young lady's account, who, she thinks, has a prior title to him; but no frowns, no reserve, no ill temper does she affect to him: all serenity and good humour; she only considers how to remedy the evils he has occasioned. Adieu, my dear

dear HENNY, I am frightened at the length
of this epistle; believe me

Sincerely yours,
CHARLOTTE DANBY.

L E T T E R XXV.

Lord WILTON to Sir ROBERT BOYLE.

MISS EMILY condescends now to give me a little more of her agreeable company; but never without the farmer's family being present. She addressed herself to me, before them, t'other day at dinner:—Pray, lord WILTON, says she, what advantage can you propose to yourself, by confining here a young lady, over whom you have not the smallest authority? And you, honest man, (turning to the farmer) do you fear no consequences which may ensue, from forcibly detaining in your house, a young person of condition?

The old man seemed rather struck.—
Why really, Miss, replied he, I don't
know;

know; I do nothing at all to you; this house is landlord's, and he commands in it as he thinks proper. I'm sure, I have no hand, nor no advantage in confining you.

Yes, says she, you have; this is your house now, and you have a right to set me at liberty if you please: consider, you have a daughter of your own, and how should you like to see her in the hands of a young fellow, who bears the vilest of characters?

Why, Miss, returned the old man, I would not see you hurt for the world; but his lordship does not attempt any harm to you; he only wants to make you his honourable wife; and to be sure he is vastly in love with you, or he would not offer such a thing: and you certainly cannot desire a more proper young gentleman.

And so, says she, to humour his avaritious desire to be in possession of my fortune, I am to make myself miserable for life: but I instantly demand to be set

at

at liberty: only suffer me to leave the house, and I will walk till I can meet a convenient carriage, to conduct me to my friends. I will go, says she, at your perils you oppose me.—So saying, she rose up to quit the room, and spoke with so commanding an air, that none present but myself, durst venture to approach her.

I took her by the hand, and told her, she positively must not think of leaving this house, till she had complied with my desire of making her lady WILTON. She only answered me, by taking up a knife, and aiming it at my head, which in wrestling from her, cut me in the left hand, so as to render it almost entirely useless; however, with the other, I got between her and the door, and locked it.

Her rage then exceeded all bounds, so that we were obliged to take every offensive weapon from her sight, or she would have endeavoured to sacrifice us all. Poor little bird, how it beats itself about! It
might

might as well be quiet tho', BOB, for I will now make her comply, if it is only through a principle of revenge, for the trouble she has given me.

The gentle KITTY wept; and on her knees implored us to let the lady return to her afflicted relations.—How hard, says the pretty pleader, for a young lady to be under such disagreeable restraints? Pray, father, pray, good LORD WILTON, suffer Miss EMILY to depart: She has so good an heart, who knows but in gratitude she may consent to be yours, when she is once more her own mistress. How can you, Sir, like to accept a wife upon compulsion?

Pretty KITTY—How beautiful did she look, in the midst of all her sorrow? Amiable girl.—I raised her up, and giving her a gentle kiss, told her she was an angel, and I would consider her request; but in the mean time, I begged she would make herself easy, and persuade Miss

RAVENSWORTH

RAVENSWORTH to do the same. My compliment raised a glowing blush on her fair face, which made her look really divine. Upon my soul, BOB, I am bewitched by this sweet girl.

Miss RAVENSWORTH kept looking at me, with a countenance in which was depicted disgust, contempt, and hatred. KITTY ventured to hint, that the sooner a favour was conferred, the stronger the obligation.

Obligation ! retorted EMILY ; obliged to him ! Cease, my dear KITTY, to use such mortifying expressions. I command him, as I have a right to dispose of myself in what manner I think proper, immediately to set me free ; and at your peril, yes, I say, at your peril, Lord WILTON, that you detain me longer. Coward, as you are, I know you dare not face the fury of my injured friends : perhaps now, says she (with a smile of ineffable disdain) if you let me go, I shall return the *obligation,*

gation, by desiring them to give you a private kicking, without posting you for what you are, in every publick place and company about town. But depend upon it, if you don't consent to my instant enlargement I shall have you treated in the manner you deserve; a manner you have not courage even to think of without horror.

How provoking, BOB, was this behaviour? I could almost have beat the little saucy vixen, who durst affront me in so gross a manner. No ma'am, says I, with a rapping oath, (for I was in as grand coler as the young lady) you shall never leave me, till I have either conquered your unreasonable prejudices against me, or till one of us is no more: and send for your relations, Miss, as soon as you please, you shall see I dare face them all; and maintain with the point of my sword, every action you, or any other, dares lay to my charge, as a crime.

Let me then, says she, send to these relations, and see if you can for once endeavour to prove, that a liar may sometimes by chance speak truth.

Very well, Miss RAVENSWORTH, returned I; as soon as you think proper to comply with my request, I shall subscribe to any one of yours, you shall chuse to make mention.

Puppy, replied she, how easy to talk before women? How like a reptile the thing looks, as if it was sensible of it's own nothingness; (faith, BOB, I believe I did look rather silly) a pretty thing to make a lord of! — I see, I see plainly, you feel yourself most superlatively ridiculous: how very mean does such a thing as you appear, when in company with its superiors, and those who can see into the littleness, the meanness of it's heart and sentiments? Though you join a wicked character to a most contemptible one, yet I pity your distress. Observe him, KITTY,
(I had

(I had rather she had stabbed a dagger to my heart, than said so) observe how despicable a being, is that thing called a lord, when divested of those mental and material ornaments, which bespeak the man. Come, thou poor wretch, continued she, putting me aside, stand out of my way, and let me retire to my apartment.

Stay, my dear Miss RAVENSWORTH, said I ; why will you entertain so mean an opinion, of a man who adores you ?

How little, replied she, dost thou understand the meaning of the words thou speakest ? Would the man who adored me, dare to use me thus ill ? Open the door, Lord WILTON, and let me go up stairs.

I was going to speak again, but KITTY once more interceded, and I could not refuse ; but this confounded EMILY has made me look so very small, both in her eyes, and my own, that I'm afraid I shall not very soon be able to pursue my

project, upon this little rural nymph. Ever since that day, she has done nothing but turn me into the highest ridicule; and, by her giving me so much more of her time, I do verily believe, she takes a delight in making me appear ridiculous before the family. I don't know where all this will end. I would try another kind of force, but my designs upon the little KITTY oppose such measures; at least for the present. Adieu, pray for me, (if ever thou did'st pray) and may those prayers be successful to

CHARLES WILTON.

LETTER XXVI.

Sir ROBERT BOYLE to Lord WILTON.

WHY, what a poor puny fellow art thou, CHARLES; to be disconcerted in such a manner, by the silly prattle of a romantick girl? Pray for you, indeed! — How could you think, I would

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 21

would ever spend my time to so little purpose, as praying for such a piping, whining thing? Faith, CHARLES, thou deserv'st to look as silly, or rather more so if possible, than thou describ'st thyself. To be so long under the same roof with two such little bewitching devils, and to have made no one *coup de main*, towards recompensing thyself with either of them, for the trouble thou hast had, and art likely to have, on account of that gipsy, EMILY. What art doing, man? Zounds, were I in thy place, I'd engage to have conquered half the girls in the country, ere now. Take care, CHARLES, you don't drive matters too far; *venienti, occurrere, morbo*; is my motto: and if thou dost not profit by it, and make it thine also, why thou wilt deserve to be laugh'd at. What a pretty figure will you make, CHARLES, should this little eel slip through your fingers at last; or, should her family get a knowledge of the place of her concealment;

cealment ; how wilt thou then curse thyself, for thy stupidity, and dulness, in not foreseeing the consequences ? It is the part of a wise general, when he can't take by stratagem, to make a bold effort, and storm the citadel sword in hand. I always till now ; thought thee a very MACHIAVEL : but alas, how am I deceived ? Thou art wavering, and disconcerted by a foolish girl. D . . n it, have you not one drop of gall in you ? To be wounded, ridiculed, and scandalized in so gross a manner, by the little witch ; and then sit down with, " I don't know where all this will end." Oh CHARLES, CHARLES, rouse thee, man, and take a glorious revenge. Whether she will, or will not, be lady WILTON, make thyself but master of her charms, and I'll sing *Te Deum* in thy praise, every day for a month to come.

If thou canst succeed with KITTY likewise, do ; what signifies mincing matters ? leave that to groveling spirits ; such

as thine and mine, ought to soar above the common set of beings.

Write to me as soon as possible, and make me happy by telling me thou art so. When thou art tired of KITTY, CHARLES, don't forget thou hast a friend.

Adieu ; thine as thou behav'st,

ROBERT BOYLE.

LETTER XXVII.

Lord WILTON to Sir ROBERT BOYLE.

I Do, I do curse myself, thee, EMILY, and all the world. Write to thee ! Oh BOB, BOB, to what purpose shall I write ? To acquaint thee, that she is lost, gone for ever. Curse on my stupid head, that had not iron grates to every window in the house. — Who could have suspected her of such an action ?

Well may'st thou upbraid me. — But why so late in thy admonitions ? — I was in the parlour, underneath where she used

to lay, when I heard a violent cry, of Murder, Help, Help, for God's sake. I imagined it was her; and before I could get up stairs to stop her mouth, she jumped from the window, and was immediately assisted in rising by a young fellow, who, upon her outcries, had just dismounted from his horse.

I sallied forth; and found it to be a Mr. BLANCHE, who had been very particular with her, all the evening at the masquerade.

She was begging his protection, to deliver her from the vile monster who had so long detained her. As soon as she saw me, she clung to him in all the agonies of fear; and he, addressing himself to me, said, So, lord WILTON; you, I find, are the ravisher of this young lady—Here, GEORGE, (calling to his servant) ride directly to the next market town, and bring a post-chaise, with all possible expedition. As for you, my lord,
turning

turning to me, I shall take another time to call you to an account, for such villainous behaviour: at present, my attention to the lady prevents me from chastising you as you deserve.

No, Sir, I replied, now or never; you shall sooner deprive me of life, than of Miss RAVENSWORTH; and you must sacrifice that, before I shall tamely suffer you to bear her off.

Look ye, my lord, returned he, I should be sorry to do an ungentleman like action; but as my life is at present necessary for the preservation of an injured lady, I cannot risque it, till I have seen her safely conveyed to her friends; after that, my character is too well known to make it necessary for me to inform you; that I dare meet you when and where you please: but if in the mean time, you offer any kind of violence, tending to get Miss EMILY into your power again, the contents of this little engine, pulling out a pocket

to lay, when I heard a violent cry, of Murder, Help, Help, for God's sake. I imagined it was her ; and before I could get up stairs to stop her mouth, she jumped from the window, and was immediately assisted in rising by a young fellow, who, upon her outcries, had just dismounted from his horse.

I sallied forth ; and found it to be a Mr. BLANCHE, who had been very particular with her, all the evening at the masquerade.

She was begging his protection, to deliver her from the vile monster who had so long detained her. As soon as she saw me, she clung to him in all the agonies of fear ; and he, addressing himself to me, said, So, lord WILTON ; you, I find, are the ravisher of this young lady — Here, GEORGE, (calling to his servant) ride directly to the next market town, and bring a post-chaise, with all possible expedition. As for you, my lord,
turning

turning to me, I shall take another time to call you to an account, for such villainous behaviour: at present, my attention to the lady prevents me from chastising you as you deserve.

No, Sir, I replied, now or never; you shall sooner deprive me of life, than of Miss RAVENSWORTH; and you must sacrifice that, before I shall tamely suffer you to bear her off.

Look ye, my lord, returned he, I should be sorry to do an ungentleman like action; but as my life is at present necessary for the preservation of an injured lady, I cannot risque it, till I have seen her safely conveyed to her friends; after that, my character is too well known to make it necessary for me to inform you; that I dare meet you when and where you please: but if in the mean time, you offer any kind of violence, tending to get Miss EMILY into your power again, the contents of this little engine, pulling out a pocket

pocket pistol, shall go through your head, or that of any one, who dares oppose my purpose. And, till the post chaise comes, says he to KITTY, (who looked pleased that EMILY had got a protector) be kind enough, my good girl, to bring the lady a chair out here; as I imagine, she will not again chuse to enter the house. I went in, and fetched a brace of pocket pistols, determin'd not to submit with life to the loss of her; but the dog foreseeing my intention, immediately fired, and shot me through the arm; by that means disabling me from all resistance.

I fell to the ground with loss of blood, and did not recover my senses for some time; when I found KITTY weeping over me, and a surgeon dressing my wound. I enquired, What was become of EMILY? And she answered, The gentleman had carried her off; but that she had either broke her leg, or violently sprained her ankle, for she could not set her foot to the ground.

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 27

I am now, as you see, well enough recovered to use my arm ; tho' very weak from the quantity of blood I lost, before any assistance could be got. The tender KITTY is my constant nurse. I do verily believe the girl loves me ; but I am not in a state of mind or body, to take advantage of it. I am half distracted at my disappointment ; but if ever I get her into my power again, I shall shew her no kind of mercy. Oh, I could, on her account, execrate all womankind. Adieu, BOB, write some comfort, to

Your unfortunate friend,
CHARLES WILTON.

LETTER XXIII.

EDWARD BLANCHE, Esq;

TO RICHARD RAVENSWORTH, Esq;

SIR,

'T IS with the greatest pleasure I inform you, that I have, since my excursion

excursion to A . . . , been the happy instrument of restoring the amiable Miss RAVENSWORTH to liberty ; but my happiness receives no small alloy, from my not having it in my power, as soon as I could wish, to return her to the arms of her lamenting friends.

I was yesterday riding past a genteel farm-house, when I was alarmed by a cry of Murder ! I looked up, and before I could dismount, Miss RAVENSWORTH (for it was she herself who had seen me ;) jump'd from a chamber window. I ran as quick as possible to her assistance : — she said, She was not hurt, but only frightened ; and begged I would instantly convey her from that detested place.

I sent my servant to C . . . for a post-chaise ; and after a small parley with lord WILTON, I bore her off ; but found, when she came to walk, she had got a hurt, which disabled her from reaching the chaise without help. — She seemed in pretty good
spirits

spirits till we came to C . . . ; but then, upon examining her leg, found it so prodigiously swelled, that there was an absolute necessity for applying to a surgeon; who, when he arrived, declared it to be a violent sprain, which having been so long disregarded, together with the agitation of spirits she had undergone, had brought on a slight fever; which would endanger her life, in the most imminent degree, if she was removed till it was somewhat abated.

As I find he thinks it will be a work of time, I write these few lines, that either Mrs. CLAYTON, or some one of her female friends, may be induced to come and see her properly attended to; especially as she seems so prodigiously uneasy to be among them. In the mean time, I will use my utmost endeavours for the preservation of so valuable a life; which however, as yet, the doctor says, if no worse symptoms appear, is in no kind of danger.

Grieved as I am, that your lovely cousin
should,

should, in the slightest degree, be a sufferer; yet my mind is now in a state of the highest tranquillity, when I compare it to the agonizing terrors I experienced, at seeing her throw herself from a window of such a height.

I believed it next to an impossibility, that so tender a frame should escape with life, after so rude a shock. I fancy, the sooner any of her own sex arrive to take care of her, the sooner they will expedite her recovery; as her situation among strangers is rather awkward, and she seems to be too sensible of it. I am, Sir, with compliments to the ladies,

Your most obedient humble servant,

EDWARD BLANCHE.

L E T T E R XXIX.

MISS DANBY to MISS SEAGROVE.

JOY! — Joy! — my dear HENNY — we have had a letter from young BLANCHE. — How lucky, that he should be

be her deliverer ! He's a charming young fellow.—I'm half in love with him—What say you, my dear ? shall I attempt to rival this little EMILY ?—Say but the word, HENNY, and I'll put on all my artillery of smiles, soft looks, and languishing airs, and take the hero captive.—Ah ! CHARLOTTE, says Miss SEAGROVE, What ! suppose that you can break the chains, imposed on him by the lovely EMILY !—Yes, HENNY, I say, if you desire it, I'll arm for conquest, and make no doubt of coming off victorious.—And can I then, oh ! can your CHARLOTTE, bestow a word, a thought, on any but the accomplished RAVENSWORTH ?—forbid it Love, forbid it Constancy ; for him my foolish heart first took the alarm of love, and for him must it ever beat, or ever cease its motion.

How, says my friend, can CHARLOTTE DANBY, my once discreet CHARLOTTE, disclose such sentiments in favour of a man, whose hand and heart are destined
for

for another? And where's the crime, my HENNY? Does it proceed from a too great susceptibility of heart? — If so, learn to pity a fellow sinner; for if that's a fault, who is more guilty than my tender, my amiable HENRIETTA?

RAVENSWORTH, 'tis true, was destined for his pretty cousin; but her heart is irrecoverably bestowed upon another; and on such a man as does honour to the choice of a girl, of whom, indeed, there are few, very few, will be found worthy. But what is all this, you'll tell me, to Miss RAVENSWORTH?—Unkind CHARLOTTE, thus to keep me in suspense about an event, in which my heart so entirely interests itself. Call me not unkind, my love, and I will tell you all. But my spirits are so agitated, so fluttered, my whole soul so divided betwixt hope, fear, love, joy, sorrow, and a variety of such contending passions, that I know not where to begin, nor how connect my story into

into any kind of method. — Didn't I tell you of a letter — a letter from young **BLANCHE** to the amiable **RAVENSWORTH**. It was to acquaint us, that our **EMILY** was, through his means, at liberty ; but jumped from a window, in her extreme impatience to be with him, and sprained her ancle : the consequence of which was a fever, which detains her at C . . . , about a stage from her late prison.

He desir'd that Mrs. **CLAYTON**, or some of her female acquaintance, would instantly come, and remain with her till she was recovered. Gladly would the friendly **MARIA** have complied with the request ; but her husband, her vile husband, would not suffer it. Kind as she has been to such a man, tenderly as she has overlooked all his faults ; this is the return she meets with.

The poor thing is half distracted ; she begged permission to attend her **EMILY**, with the most urgent intreaties ; but in

vain : forgetting the care with which his wife had been attended by her, she could gain nothing but the most cutting refusals. He surely cannot think, Miss DANVERS has disclos'd her story ; if he did—he could not dare to brave it in so vile a manner—Poor Mrs. CLAYTON—how will she be afflicted, till she hears of her sweet friend's recovery ?

Finding it was in vain to solicit further leave for her own personal attendance, she came and entreated my aunt, to let me go with young RAVENSWORTH, to be with his charming cousin in her illness.

You know the friendly and humane disposition of my aunt ; who did not hesitate a moment, to send her niece on so pleasing, so benevolent an errand : I was ordered immediately to pack up what few things I might want, and repair to C . . ., without further delay.

My aunt's bad state of health would not suffer her to accompany me ; otherwise,
wife,

wife, I saw she had rather have attended me. — Was she afraid of EMILY's too charming cousin? — Oh, HENNY! the deed was done. — Your friend was wounded too deeply, from the first moment she beheld him, ever to have felt the same sensations in favour of another.

Before I could be entirely prepared, he stopped with a post-chaise — How like an ADONIS, he appeared! — how were his fine black eyes enlivened, at the joyful news of his recovered EMILY! But it was a joy, arising from friendship, not from love. Her indifference had long changed his sentiments of tenderness, to the more calm sensations of friendship. — He told me so, HENNY; should I disbelieve the flattering accents?

When we were seated in the chaise, he took me by the hand: — How kind — how tender — how like the amiable Miss DANBY, this friendly attendance upon our poor EMILY! — Oh! Miss DANBY,

how many instances do you daily give of your exquisite sensibility ! — He looked at me — he fixed his fine eyes on mine, till I was unable to reply.

I trembled — I was too visibly confused. Oh ! my beloved CHARLOTTE, says he, snatching that hand to his lips, which he till then held in his, words are too faint to tell how tenderly I love you — Forgive me, forgive me, my dear Miss DANBY, (seeing I began to look grave) the abruptness of this declaration : — long has my heart felt the most tender sensations for you — long have I adored the too amiable CHARLOTTE, but never till now had an opportunity of declaring the violence of my passion. — Will you, Miss DANBY, by an unkind refusal, plunge into despair the man who adores you beyond his being ?

For heav'n's sake, Mr. RAVENSWORTH, replied I, disengaging my hand from his, what can be the meaning of declarations so astonishing, and so utterly improper :

are

are not you, Sir, engaged to Miss RAVENSWORTH?—and should not I, by encouraging addresses so entirely contrary to the views of your whole family, be acting a part, which would draw on me the odium, and neglect of every friend both on your side and my own?—Cease, Mr. RAVENSWORTH, for heav'n's sake, cease proposals so very absurd, and let me suppose this the effect of raillery, in order to make us both for a short time forget the danger of your lovely cousin.

No, Miss DANBY, says he, never will I cease to adore you—How can you suppose, I would railly on a subject on which depends my present, and future happiness. 'Tis true, when we were children, EMILY and I, by parents, who could not answer for what turn our inclinations might take, were designed for each other:—'tis likewise true, that till I was acquainted with the lovely CHARLOTTE DANBY, I thought I should be happy

with my destin'd wife, as she has every quality to make herself agreeable; but one — that one, my CHARLOTTE, which you so eminently possess — a feeling, a tender, susceptible heart. — But had I been even inclined to adore her, my portion must have been the greatest misery; as you see plainly, she is fully determined not to love me — Oh, Miss DANBY! can that gentle disposition change itself, only to make the man who doats on you, unhappy? — Even EMILY herself, I'm sure, would strenuously plead my cause: — but I would owe your pity to my own persuasions.

He looked at me again, and paused with trembling eagerness for my answer. — The agitation, which seemed to take possession of his whole frame, and the expressive eloquence of his eyes, and language, joined to the fluttering of a fond heart, which had long been his, overcame me: I burst into tears — I could make no reply.

Ah!

Ah! HENNY, how tender, how amiable, the solicitude he expressed for me! I could no longer withstand his instances. I promis'd, if he could obtain the consent of his own friends, and my aunt's, I should not oppose his inclinations.

I need not tell you the extasies he was in; nor will I describe to you my own sensations. — You, who so tenderly doat upon your HARRY, can easily suppose the whole.

We arrived, in this state of mind, at the inn which contained our EMILY. — Young BLANCHE met us at the door, and I was conducted up stairs to EMILY's apartment. She put by the curtain, when she heard my voice, and seemed to be transported to an uncommon degree of spirits. I am now writing in her room: she sends the tenderest love to you, and to her dear grandmother. Adieu, my love; believe me Your sincere friend,

CHARLOTTE DANBY.

L E T T E R XXX.

Miss DANBY to Miss SEAGROVE.

EMILY is rather worse, my dear HENNY. — The joy at seeing her cousin and me, has overpowered her spirits, and increased her disorder. — She would not suffer me to remove from her bed-side, all the night, I arrived here, and her tongue run so glibly, that I was really afraid the consequences would be disagreeable.

Her leg too is extremely bad, and helps to heighten the violence of her fever. — She has been all this day, at times, light-headed : young BLANCHE raves almost as much as herself. He is altered within these few days, to an astonishing degree : He neither eats, nor sleeps, and hardly breathes, but when we talk to him of her.

My amiable RAVENSWORTH (yes, my dear friend, I will call him mine, since he has given me such convincing proofs
of

of his affection) told him yesterday, That he saw plainly the violent passion, he entertained for the lovely EMILY. — The youth seemed confounded, fetched a sigh, and owned, That he believed it impossible for any man to behold the amiable Miss RAVENSWORTH with indifference; and that to behold her, in such a situation, was rather more than he could bear, without experiencing the most extreme anguish, at the probability there was of losing her for ever.

Young RAVENSWORTH told him, He hoped his tenderness had exaggerated her danger; that he did not doubt but to see her recover, and make him compleatly happy: — A happiness, he knew no man more truly worthy of.

EDWARD, (for so they call him) began to put on a serious countenance, and said, The then uneasy state of his mind, could but indifferently brook any kind of railery; that he was sensible of Miss RAVENSWORTH'S

WORTH's pre-engagements, and had never had a hope beyond that of seeing her, and being now and then entertained with her agreeable conversation; and therefore he thought Mr. RAVENSWORTH's hints, at that time, a little *mal a propos*.

I turned pale at this speech — Oh, how I trembled! lest these two most amiable men should, through a slight misunderstanding, end their difference by a serious quarrel. But had you seen my DICKY — oh HENNY, I shall adore him for it, as long as I live — had you seen how he put an end to my apprehensions, by the obligingness of his answer, you must have loved him almost as well I do, my dear.

BLANCHE, says the sweet lad, forgive me, if I have not spoke intelligibly; I meant to assure you, that my engagements with my cousin are at an end; that I adore this angel here, seizing my hand, beyond every blessing this world, without her, can afford: — and that Miss EMILY's tenderness for her generous deliverer, is equal
with

with his own ; and that when she recovers, which I hope will be very soon, I shall be happy in seeing a couple united, who, from their many admirable qualities, cannot fail of being truly blessed in each other ; especially, as I hope this late event will help to tame a few of my little cousin's wild, untractable movements.

Oh ! not for the world, says young **BLANCHE**, interrupting him ; not for the universe, would I have one alteration made in that angelic woman. — I adore that sweet gaiety and liveliness of temper which she possesses, beyond any thing I ever yet met with, in any other woman. Forgive the eagerness of my expressions, **Mr. RAVENSWORTH**. — I cannot doubt your sincerity ; and now I am at liberty to open to you the sentiments of my heart, my tongue will never cease acknowledging its gratitude, nor expatiating upon the merits of the divine **EMILY**. — But ah, says he, the tears starting into his eyes, how can I
give

give way to any joyful sensations, while she lies in so dangerous an illness ; or how dare I flatter myself, if she recovers, that she will shew me more favour than the many who have solicited before me, and been refused.

Hold, says RAVENSWORTH, let me catch you piping in the tragic strain once more, and I shall absolutely wish you as unsuccessful, as I am sure you will be otherwise : pluck up your spirits, man, and rejoice at the partiality she has already shewn you. —Egad, I question for all her confinement, if she had seen me under her window, that she would have jumped out to me. —What a plague, would you have her take you about the neck, and kiss you ? — She has testified as much of her regard for you, I think, as any reasonable man can desire ; and she does nothing but talk of you night and day : (indeed, he said very true, for his name is never out of her mouth for half an hour together, sensible, or otherwise.)

Oh ! excuse my fears, says BLANCHE ; but what will it avail me to know my happiness, if it should be immediately snatched from me. Oh ! I cannot bear the thoughts of losing her.

Upon my word, Mr. BLANCHE, interrupted your friend CHARLOTTE, you fill me with such melancholy ideas, that I shall soon be in as desponding a situation as yourself, if you don't cheer up.

Rot your despondencies, says the lively RAVENSWORTH ; I vow, BLANCHE, if you instil these gloomy thoughts into my sweet girl here, I shall bear you malice for it, and try to mar your fortunes. It's my belief, if my sprightly cousin knew what a whining swain she had got, she would discard him, in spite of all her present fondness.

Oh ! for heaven's sake, excuse me, returned the youth, my fears and love distract me : let us take a walk, and put off these uneasy sensations. — Agreed on all sides. —

sides. — A walk we took, which in some degree answered the end proposed. — After this walk, I went to see our EMILY, who was fallen into a sweet slumber, while I write you this; may heaven restore this lovely girl to all our wishes, is the sincere prayer of,

Your affectionate friend,
CHARLOTTE DANBY.

LETTER XXXI.

The same to the same.

WHY, my friend, ah! why must I ever be the messenger of ill news? The doctor has just left Miss RAVENSWORTH, and her fever is got to such a height, that he apprehends her life to be in great danger. Mr. BLANCHE's servant is dispatched for a physician from London, tho' we are in great fear, it will be to little purpose.

Why must the world be deprived of it's greatest ornament? Oh! HENNY, I hardly

ly know what I write. — She began to grow worse yesterday; tho' she is, and has been since I wrote my last, perfectly sensible.

She sent for me up this morning, after breakfast, and desired me to sit down by her. — She put her hand out of bed, and taking hold of mine — My dear CHARLOTTE, says she, I find myself considerably worse; — but don't make yourself uneasy, my love; seeing the tears start from my eyes — it is yet possible, tho' I fancy hardly probable, that I may recover; and if I do not, my good Miss DANBY ought not to envy me an exchange, which I flatter myself will be for my advantage. — Consider, it is our business in this world, to endeavour at arming ourselves against the many misfortunes we are daily liable to meet with; and when you reflect on the many friends and relations, to whom your life and health are so truly valuable, you will not, I am sure, give way to an un-
availing

availling sorrow, which, by indulging it, may destroy either one or both of them.

Oh, Miss RAVENSWORTH, for heaven's sake, spare me, says I — I cannot bear to hear you seriously talk on so distracting a subject. — My life is of very little consequence, when put in competition with the many who will suffer for the loss of yours. Poor Mrs. RAVENSWORTH — do you think she will ever outlive her beloved grand-daughter; or do you imagine the amiable BLANCHE will not follow his adored EMILY?

Oh! my dear Miss DANBY, says the sweet girl, I am sincerely touched at the thoughts of what they will suffer; but I hope it will be but for a short time. I hope their good sense will soon get the better of their affliction, on my account, and teach them not to repine at the decrees of Providence. — I love my dear grandmother with the tenderest affection: — I never knew a parent but herself. — I love
and

and honour her as the most respectable of characters; but I know her philosophy and religion, will enable her to conquer her regret at an event, which, sooner or later, we must all submit to.

As to BLANCHE, I own it to you, my dear friend, that I loved him from the first moment I beheld him. — The generous assistance I received from him, at a time I was left almost without hope, has doubly endeared him to my heart; and the tender concern he has testified for me since, make me wish, I could have lived to have acknowledged the great sense I have of his uncommon merit. But cheer up, my amiable CHARLOTTE, for my sake compose your spirits, and endeavour to bestow that comfort upon the lovely EDWARD, his youth and strength of passions, I fear, will stand so much in need of.

Will you not promise your EMILY this mark of friendship, my sweet lass? says she, an enchanting smile diffusing itself

over her languid, but ever beautiful countenance: — Do, my CHARLOTTE, be composed, if not for my sake, for that of my young cousin; preserve yourself for him; he doats upon you, Miss DANBY: I have seen him give such proofs of it since my present illness, that I know his life depends on yours. Do not then, my dear girl, destroy it by an ill timed grief. Come, continued she, finding I was unable to answer her, but by my tears — I see I have affected you too deeply; leave me, my dear Miss DANBY; I think I am rather inclinable to sleep, and I hope when you return to me again, I shall see you in better spirits.

In the most agonizing state of mind I rose up, and left the room; fearing the violence of my agitations might discompose and prejudice this amiable woman. When I came down, Mr. RAVENSWORTH saw I had been in tears: he tenderly enquired the cause, and in broken accents

I made

I made shift to repeat most of our conversation; but before I had done speaking, BLANCHE fell lifeless to the floor. Our whole attention was now employed in recovering him; but it was two hours, before he was quite sensible.

We had him carried up to bed, and sent again for EMILY's doctor, who seems to be a very clever man. He bled him; and he is now in as bad a situation as herself. He raves about her continually; and my poor DICKY is, between the two, almost in as pitiable a condition as either of them.

Oh HENNY, HENNY, if she dies, what will, what must be done to break it too Mrs. RAVENSWORTH? Mrs. CLAYTON too will hardly survive the news; and I am almost thrown into a state of stupid insensibility, at the melancholy shocking prospects such a calamity presents.

May heav'n avert a scene, which will in all likelihood prove fatal to so many worthy

hearts, deserving of a better fate. — Oh ! that vile Lord WILTON — what has not he to answer for ? — He has been dangerously ill, I hear, from a wound received in skirmishing with Mr. BLANCHE ; a circumstance, his modesty always omitted, in his relation of that affair ; and which we should not have been acquainted with, but this being the market town to that, and several adjacent villages, the servants heard it mentioned by some country fellows at the inn, and repeated it again to Mr. RAVENSWORTH.

How unaccountable does it appear, in the sight of us weak mortals, that such wretches as him are suffered to walk about the earth with impunity, and to recover from the most dangerous illnesses ; while the more worthy part of mankind, are either visited by the keenest misfortunes, or else snatched from life, in the prime of youth and health ! — But it is certainly right, or else that just Providence, who
presides

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 53

presides over us all, would not suffer it to be. Adieu, my friend, — may you soon be relieved from those anxieties you have so long struggled with, prays

Your afflicted,
CHARLOTTE DANBY.

L E T T E R XXXII.

RICHARD RAVENSWORTH, Esq;

To Mrs. CLAYTON.

PREPARE yourself, my dear Mrs. CLAYTON, to be made acquainted with the most heart-rending news, that one of your sympathizing, friendly disposition, can be told. The once gay, lively EMILY, is — at this time, that I am writing, perhaps no more. She has some time been dangerously ill, as I sent you word by the messenger that went to town for a physician. — When he came, he said, It was too late — The most perfect of her sex was gone for ever: — it was next to an impossibility, she should ever be restored.

She spoke to him with calmness, and composure; and when he left her, summon'd us all into her bed-room. BLANCHE was ill in bed; but on hearing that she had sent for him, insisted upon attending us. — Never was there a more melancholy scene. — We all entered together. — The once lovely EMILY, supported by pillows, was raised up in bed, and made a motion with her hand, for us to come near.

How shocking a sight! to see that beauteous form, — pale — languid — emaciated — her eyes sunk in her head — and tho' still amiable, altered past our knowledge.

We continued some time silent, while she was making efforts to raise her voice to an intelligible pitch. — The lovely CHARLOTTE DANBY, hardly able to support herself, sat weeping on a chair beside her: — Young BLANCHE, with eyes, which spoke more forcibly than words, fix'd with all the agonies of despair upon this adored object,

object, stood on t'other side; and myself, I believe, almost equally entranced with affliction, placed next to Miss DANBY.— At last she spoke, and addressed herself to me with a half smile.

Come near me, cousin — Do I frighten you? — I believe I have lost a little of my usual bloom; but I am not quite such a spectacle as I shall be to your views in a few hours. Adieu, my dear DICKY, continued she. — I fancy, the physician has not left you ignorant of my true state — I sent for you, to take my leave for ever, and to desire you, as my last request, to break this affair as lightly as possible to my ever valued parent. — Endeavour to comfort her, my dear cousin, for the loss of a child, I know she fondly loves — Tell her I am going where I hope I shall be happy; and that I begged it, on my death-bed, she would preserve so estimable a life, for the good of those people who are happy enough to call her, either rela-

tion or friend—Don't weep, DICKY, (seeing me put my handkerchief to my eyes) You are a man—act as one—and when you will give yourself time for reflection, you will find, that you ought to bestow your tears and compassion on the afflicted living, and not on the peaceful ashes of the dead.—I think, my dear cousin, you possess a worthy heart; may you never swerve from it's dictates; and I think I need not make it my request, that you will ever make a tender and affectionate husband to this deserving girl, turning to Miss DANBY.—And you, my dear CHARLOTTE—will you promise me before I die, that you will bestow your hand on a man, who, I am certain, centers all his happiness in you alone?

Indeed, my good friends, I am most sincerely concerned to see you all thus afflicted at an event so common, and, at one time or other, so very certain.—What say you, my dear CHARLOTTE—will you

you comply with the last request your EMILY will ever make? Believe me, if I did not think it for your mutual welfare, I should not ask it.

Oh! ma'am, says Miss DANBY, I would and will comply with any desire of yours; but live, live, my dear EMILY, or we never can be truly blessed.

I am satisfied, my dear, returned the dying beauty: life is not in my own disposal, or else I would willingly live to see you all as happy as you deserve; and to return you, Sir, addressing herself to Mr. BLANCHE, a few of those obligations you have so generously bestowed upon me.—What, silent too? perceiving he seemed hardly to mind what she said—Will not you add one more favour, to those already conferred, and oblige me, by promising, that you will endeavour to restrain your grief?

He burst into tears; a relief which brought him to himself, and made him
more

more sensible of the scene before him. — She held out an alabaster hand, and begged in the most soothing terms, that he would be comforted.

Oh! my FAMILY, says he, at last collecting his voice; speak not of comfort to a wretch like me. — Oh heaven! support me in this trying moment, and suffer me, at least, if I cannot keep her with me, to accompany this sweet angel to the grave.

He spoke this with such energy of woe, that she was affected by it. — She wept too; and suffering him to clasp her in his arms, seemed to want equally with him, some of that comfort, she had, in vain, been endeavouring to administer to us. At last, raising herself up, and giving me a paper: — That contains, says she, my bequests of a few remembrances to my friends; — see, my dear cousin, that they be punctually executed. — Remember me to Mrs. CLAYTON, and tell her, I wished to have given her a parting kiss. — She then

then embraced us all: and falling once more into the arms of her young lover — said — Adieu! — be comforted — and never spoke again.

When he found she was quite insensible, he fell motionless to the ground; as did the lovely CHARLOTTE. — Oh! Mrs. CLAYTON, never was there so tragical a scene: — but, if I ever live to meet the detested cause, the execrable WILTON, he shall pay dear for the sufferings he has inflicted on us all. I, almost as lost to sensation as themselves, had them removed out of the room; and upon examining the charming EMILY again, found that she still breathed, tho' too much spent to talk. I stayed by her, till the doctor arrived; who said, if she was yet sensible, it would be better to leave her to herself. I then went to see the two unhappy objects, this dreadful catastrophe had made; and they are both very ill. CHARLOTTE will soon recover, the doctor says, but poor BLANCHE is

is in some danger. In this situation I left them all, to give you this melancholy relation. Adieu, my dear Mrs. CLAYTON.—I dare not send an account of this to the family, but must trust to your prudence to break it to them. I am

Your very obedient humble servant,

RICHARD RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XXXIII.

Lord WILTON to Sir ROBERT BOYLE.

SHE's mine, she's mine, BOB, beyond the reach of fate. — The charming KITTY has, at length, amply repaid me for all my trouble, with that little d . . . I EMILY. Now for thy *Te Deum*. — Oh! BOB, how shall I find words to express the triumphant joy, which at this time diffuses itself round my heart. — To attempt a description would be daring, did I even possess the eloquence of the immortal CICERO.

Nay, (I hear you say) d . . n your CICERO's, and your eloquence, CHARLES,
give

give me but the whole account legibly, and in downright English, and I'll forgive thee this delay. — Oh! thou poltroon — and so thou think'st, I will at once let thee into such a scene of victory: — No, no — BOB, 'twould be too much for thee — thy envious soul would, in it's first transports, wish me at the d . . l, and make thee curse thy dull stars, for not throwing such fortune in thy way.

Now do I see thee bite thy lip, and threaten my poor letter with a roasting, if I don't soon come to the point. — Do, if you dare, BOB; think but so again, and my pen is stopped for ever.

Well, but my dear CHARLES, have some compassion on my curiosity. — Oh! thou incorrigible dog! — And so, thou can'st in one breath curse, bite thy lips, and flatter, when thou think'st there is any iniquity going forward, with which thou would'st be made acquainted. — Well, BOB, good words go a great way with me; and so I will,

will, as soon as I can can collect my scattered thoughts, give thee as good an account as I am able.

I think I told thee in my last, that the young rascal, who took EMILY away, gave me a wound in the arm. — 'Tis that wound to which I am in a great measure indebted for my present happiness. Faith, BOB, I never had so good an opinion before of that old proverb, which says, 'Tis a bad wind that blows no body good. For, egad, had any one told me a month ago, that I should think myself fortunate in being shot through the arm — I should have been almost ready to have shot him thro' the head.

When I came to myself, after the above accident, I found KITTY weeping over me, and a surgeon dressing my wound. — Tho' I was not then in a condition, to take advantage of the tender concern she shewed for me, yet I was determined not to delay it a moment after I was able; and accordingly,

ingly, as I grew better, took hold of every occasion to make myself agreeable to her, and likewise to persuade her, she was perfectly so to me.

The dear girl received my assiduities with a modest timidity; and I believe, had she thought I was either able or willing to have taken advantage of her situation, in being so near me, she would certainly have avoided it. Oh! Bob, what raptures did I not enjoy, in receiving every thing I took from her dear lovely hands! The most nauseous medicines, when given by her, were delicious. — Her charming soothing so alleviated the pain I felt in having the ball extracted, that egad, I would almost undergo it again, to have a repetition of them.

Am I not then a villain, Bob, thus to repay this dear girl for all her tenderness; to bring shame and sorrow upon a (till now) virtuous family, under whose roof I was thus friendly protected? — Oh Bob, libertine

libertine as I am, I could almost wish the deed undone again. — Nay, don't laugh at me. — Conscience will sting us now and then, but I will chase the intruder hence. Ayaunt — begone — there, 'tis gone — and I am again thy precious brother in iniquity. — Well then — to proceed with my story. — KITTY continued to nurse me, till I was almost well; (and faith, I believe myself totally indebted to her great care, for my so speedy recovery) during which time, I was planning a scheme, to take her sweet unsuspecting innocence off it's guard. An accident happened t'other day, which brought my project to bear much sooner than my most sanguine wishes could expect.

Old PLOUGHSHARE, a neighbouring farmer, had a son married; and having got a pretty good portion, as they call it, with his wife, the old Don was so pleased, that almost all the country round were invited; HARROW's family consequently. — Out of respect

respect to their noble guest, they would have excused themselves; but I insisted so strenuously on their going, that they were forced to obey. — Just as they were all ready to sally forth, in their best doublets and hose, I contriv'd to have a relapse. — A fainting fit, BOB: — and by that means had like to have detained them at home — but that was not what I wanted. — The charming KITTY, beautiful as an angel, little suspecting she was decked for sacrifice, was the only one whom I wanted to detain. Accordingly, as soon as I thought proper to come to myself, and saw the family around me, I insisted upon their going. But as they could not think of leaving my lordship alone, (and I suppose not dreaming I was in a condition to do her any harm, even if inclin'd that way, which I dare say they never thought of) desired, KITTY might stay with me. — With feign'd reluctance, I at length complied with their request; and KITTY — nothing loath — was my companion.

My rascal took care of the maid. And after supper I began the attack, by assuring the dear girl of my inviolable attachment to her —telling her I could not live without her; —that I had entirely given up all thoughts of Miss RAVENSWORTH; —and that I would certainly marry her at the death of my father, on whom I was entirely dependant, and who would disinherit me, if I made choice of a wife without his approbation: (the only case, BOB, in which I would, even upon a supposition, have brought my father out of his grave again, where, thank heaven, he has been laid these three years.)

Your father, my lord! I thought you had none living. —Yes, my angel, returned I; but his great age and infirmities, which hinder him from appearing much in the world, is, I suppose, the reason why you have not heard speak of him. —I saw she believ'd, and was affected; and therefore left out no entreaty or assiduity which might

might induce her to comply. — At length, with the greatest difficulty, I conquered all her scruples.

You know, “ I have a tongue (as RICHARD says) can wheedle with the d . . . l.” — And faith I needed it all afterwards : — for when my sweet angel began to reflect on the *faux pas* she had been guilty of, her sorrow broke out into the most bitter invectives against her own credulity ; (for she never once accused me) so that it was with the greatest difficulty I could get her composed again.

However, I so far did, as to drive away all traces of her grief before the old folks returned. — Ever since, she has been better reconciled to her fate, and in a few days I propose taking her to town ; tho’ how to accomplish that without her parents knowledge, is an affair I want your advice in, knowing the fertility of your brain in these kind of inventions. — Adieu, BOB ; write immediately, and believe me sincerely yours,

CHARLES WILTON.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Sir ROBERT BOYLE—In answer.

F A I T H, my lord,—had I not been perfectly well acquainted with your lordship's hand-writing, and known too the circumstance of your being at HARROW's, I should have either doubted my senses, or thought some one had forged your hand.—Why, your lordship's brain must certainly be affected by the wound in your arm, to make you write in such a stile to me, about the mere trifle of triumphing over the virtue of a childish country girl, and a daughter of one of your tenants.—And then, I think, CHARLES, you had so much of the fool in you, as to wish the work undone—Why at the rate thou goest on at, thou wilt presently be able to open a Tabernacle, and like W d and W y preach up reformation to all thy late brothers in iniquity, and conjure them

them to take thee for an example, and quit the road to d n.

Oh ! fie, — fie — CHARLES ; little did I expect to have my advice asked about such a foolish idle scheme as that of carrying the little syren KITTY up to town. — I was in hopes, now thou art a sound man again, to have heard thee vowing destruction on the head of that saucy intruder and spoiler of thy happiness, and the little runaway, EMILY : nay, I should not have been surpriz'd if thou had'st got her again into thy power, and serv'd her in the manner she deserves — When instead of that, comes a letter filled with as much bombastical nonsense, as if thou had'st debauched a Duke's daughter or a Nun — *O tempora ! O mores !* — How art thou fallen off from thy once noble self, and our noble cause ! — What a pretty figure wilt thou make when any of EMILY's relations shall accost thee in town with — Your servant, my lord : — I hope Miss

RAVENSWORTH is well; and that your lordship is perfectly recovered of the wound in your arm? — Or perhaps — If your lordship is so far recovered, as to be able to vindicate the injury you offered our family, I shall be glad to see you at nine to-morrow morning, behind MONTAGUE HOUSE. Yours, &c.

Really, CHARLES, these things will amply repay thee the expence and trouble both of mind and body, which thou hast been at. — Yet, thou can'st tamely sit down with the possession of a poor farmer's daughter, stile thyself a happy fellow, and send post for my advice, how to take her to town without her parents consent.

Oh! thou reptile; and dost thou really think I would deign to give my counsel in a matter which will redound so little to thy credit? — No — no — CHARLES, my opinion is that you immediately give all your soft nonsensical transport, and the cause of 'em to the winds. — Instantly depart

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 71

depart in quest of EMILY, and her knight errant;—blow him to the d . . . l, and take what revenge on her thou think'st best. — If ever thou set'st any value on my advice, follow it now, and I shall be always ready to assist thee with it in future. Spare no pains to get her into your power again: and in the mean time, I will set some of my myrmidons to work, and if she be above ground I think 'twill be impossible for her to escape us all — Adieu, CHARLES; Revenge is the word.

ROBERT BOYLE.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,

To Mrs. CLAYTON.

LOOK again, MARIA. — Yes, the superscription is in EMILY's hand to be sure — the name at the bottom too is hers. — Bless me, I thought the girl had been dead a week ago! — Ay, may be so;

F 4

but

but I told you once before, I had the old proverb on my side ; if you did not believe me then, you do now, I hope.

I am indeed, after being given up by the physicians, and despaired of by all my friends, at last, in a fair way of being restored to life and them. — I have been very ill, and still keep my bed ; but being told by cousin DICK, with a long phiz, that he had wrote a melancholy epistle to my dear Mrs. CLAYTON prognosticating the exit of her friend, I determined to contradict it myself, by setting pen to paper in *propria persona*, tho' I am still very weak.

POOR CHARLOTTE DANBY looks very ill : — they tell me, she has never left my bed-side till within these two days, that she saw me absolutely out of danger ; nor complied with the repeated solicitations of my cousin RAVENSWORTH, to take a little rest.

Young BLANCHE — Heigh-ho ! (why do I sigh, MARIA? — I think this illness
has

has deprived me of my usual spirits) looks like an absolute ghost : — he has been dying too. — I think we are a most tragical collection of phizzes at present. — Cousin DICK, who, you know, used to fancy himself handsome, looks almost as emaciated as the rest of them. — As for me, as I am determined never to think myself ugly, I have not thought proper yet to call for a glass ; and as none of those about me dare mention any thing of an alteration in my countenance, I remain still of opinion that I am perfectly beautiful.

Here's a strange little apothecary ; quite a contrast to that gentleman, whom the famous SHAKESPEAR brings us acquainted with, in his play of ROMEO and JULIET ; is the only well thriven soul that appears in my room ; and he talks me into the vapours, and out of them again, a dozen times, before I can get quit of him. — Holds forth most learnedly on the nature of fevers in general, and of mine in particular ;

ticular; which, he says, was of a most stubborn and dangerous nature:—renders himself great merit on my being so well recovered; bestows a small share on Providence, and none at all in the physicians; declaring that he has more knowledge in every kind of fever, and indeed in diseases in general, than all the faculty put together; and that if he had not entirely altered the medicines ordered by them, I should not now have been among the living. This is a piece of secret history, which, had I slept with my forefathers, would, I suppose, have been buried in oblivion.

However, to give little DAPPER his due, I believe him to have some skill in his profession; and after having returned most of my thanks to heaven, who has undoubtedly had the greatest hand in restoring me, I bestow the rest on him.—As he knows the news of the whole town and country, he acquainted me, that yesterday lord

WILTON

WILTON carried off the farmer's daughter, in whose house I was confined ; and the parents, whose only child she was, remain almost heart-broke at the loss of her.

That man will one day meet with the reward of all his wickedness. — Oh ! heavens, here comes my little Diascordium. — Where shall I hide my letter ? — But here he is. — Now for a scold, on the imprudence of venturing so soon to hurry my spirits by such an exercise. — Ay, I thought so. — Stay, I'll give him you *verbatim*.

Bless me, madam, (significantly shaking his peruke, for I can hardly perceive he has any head, and pulling down a pair of enormous point ruffles) what can you be about ? — Sure my eyes must deceive me ! You certainly are not writing ? Pray, let me feel your pulse. — I fear some alteration for the worse, in consequence of your imprudence. My good Sir, I have just finished, and then my pulse is very much
at

at your service. Bless me, madam, says he, turning to CHARLOTTE, why would you suffer the young lady to write so soon ? Upon my word, I can never answer for the efficacy of medicines, while my orders are disobeyed.

Indeed, Sir, replied CHARLOTTE, I have dissuaded her all in my power, but she would not be contradicted. — You know, my dear madam, says he, turning to me, I ordered you to be kept warm, and by no means suffered to sit up ; you have not yet sufficient strength for it. Consider the very dangerous situation you have escaped from, and take care of a relapse, for if that should happen, it is not in the power of medicine to save you. — At this they all take the alarm. — BLANCHE too, who hitherto has not dared to controul me, now joins the doctor. — One moment, good people — pray, let me finish, and I'll be perfectly obedient to your orders. — Oh ! this wicked CHARLOTTE ;
spare

spare my pen a moment, while I say Adieu,
to my beloved MARIA, and conclude my-
self her affectionate friend,

EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XXXVI.

Miss DANBY to Miss SEAGROVE.

AT last, my dear HENRIETTA, we
are relieved from our anxiety, and
I can once more resume my pen, with a
heart grown light in proportion as I find
the dear EMILY out of danger. — What
I, and indeed what we have all suffered
from her late illness, is better felt by so
susceptible a mind as yours, than described
by the pen of the most elegant writer. —
She has been given up by us all, and we
waited in hourly expectation of her death.
This is the reason, why you have not
heard from me. — I have been half dis-
tracted; — thank heaven, our fears are
now at an end.

She

She sent for us all up some time ago, and took a formal leave, with a calmness and fortitude uncommon in the most aged people, worn out with infirmities and misfortunes; much more in a young beauty, in the bloom of youth, and the greatest prosperity. After she had talked to us, till her strength was exhausted, she fainted in the arms of young **BLANCHE**; and **Mr. RAVENSWORTH**, together with the doctor, who just then entered, thinking her quite gone, bore the young lover, and myself, hardly sensible, out of the room: however, it was but a fit, which being succeeded by a gentle slumber, turned out less tragically than we expected. — The apothecary, and her cousin, sat up with her all night; and the next day, we found there were still very distant hopes of her recovery.

Mr. BLANCHE, and myself, were again suffered to attend her bed-side; and with joy we observed, in a few days, that she was growing infinitely better, tho' all that
time

time she did not appear the least sensible. At last she began to talk reasonably; and the first person she enquired for, was her intended. I need not repeat to you, the extasies of the young inamorato, at this mark of distinction; for my own part, I was quite angry, and could have almost beat the dear girl, for not giving the preference to me, who had suffered so severely on her account.

She is now, my dear HENNY, so well that she grows quite saucy — we can hardly keep her within any kind of bounds.— She does nothing but entertain herself, with ridiculing the figure of the little doctor, who attends her, and scolding master NEDDY; whom I'll assure you, she already begins to keep in very great subjection. I sometimes provoke her, by saying, he will retort it all upon herself, as soon as she is married.—She cannot bear the thoughts of being tied, as she calls it; and yet in her heart, cannot help sincerely

ly wishing herself united to a man so every way amiable, and with whom she is most violently in love.

The agreeable RAVENSWORTH, now his cousin is almost well, bestows his whole attention on me ; and we are as chearful a party *quarrée* at present, as you would wish to see. I fancy, in about a fortnight's time, we shall be able to travel, by short stages, to London ; from whence, in a short time, Miss RAVENSWORTH will return to H . . . : and, if no sinister accident happens to prevent it, I believe I shall accompany her.

Oh ! my dear HENNY, sincerely do I wish myself with you again, that I might at least assist to make your time pass a little more pleasantly, than I fear it has done for some time past. Adieu, my love ; write to me soon, and believe me

Your most affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE DANBY.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

Miss SEAGROVE to Miss DANBY.

I Received yours, my dear CHARLOTTE, and at the same time a letter from Mrs. CLAYTON, acquainting us likewise, that EMILY was out of danger. — We have been pretty near in as distracted a situation here, as you could be at C . . . Oh ! that sweet girl ! what has she not gone thro' ?

A lady came here some time ago, of the name of SANDHAM. — She is a relation of Mrs. CLAYTON's, and was sent by her to announce the afflicting news of Miss RAVENSWORTH's dangerous illness : She came in with a countenance, in which was strongly depicted the alarming cause of her errand. — After she had sat some time, she begged to speak with Mr. RAVENSWORTH in private ; and there informed him of his grandson's dreadful letter.

VOL. II.

G

I was

I was sent for into the study: the old gentleman unable to speak, refer'd me to Mrs. SANDHAM, who, drowned in tears, (for she has been acquainted with our sweet EMILY) related to me the whole affair.

Judge, my dear CHARLOTTE, if my situation was then better than theirs. — I sunk into a chair; and we all remained silent for some time. — At length, Mr. RAVENSWORTH spoke — Assist me, my dear Miss SEAGROVE — tell me, for God's sake, in what manner it will be possible for me to break this affair to my wife: — she has already been very uneasy, at not hearing from her granddaughter. — What will be her affliction, when she hears these melancholy tidings? — I fear it will be too much for her. Oh! Mrs. SANDHAM, she was the prop of my old age, the best comfort this world afforded me. — At these words he burst into tears, and we again renewed our silent lamentations. When words could find their way, we agreed to break
break

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 83

Break it to Mrs. RAVENSWORTH by degrees; first telling her of EMILY's being run away with (a circumstance as yet unknown to her) and then of her being taken ill on the road.

An opportunity offered that afternoon. Miss PATTY, and TOMMY RAVENSWORTH, went out with Mrs. SANDHAM, to shew her the park and gardens:—and Mrs. RAVENSWORTH began, by asking, Who she was, and what brought her on a visit to their house?—We informed her, that Mrs. CLAYTON had sent her with a message about EMILY; who had been carried off by lord WILTON, and had not yet been heard of. — Lucky was it for us we went no further: hardly could she bear this. — Her agonies were so great, that we feared two or three times they would be fatal to her. — Behold, the poor old gentleman, in fresh affliction. — Oh! CHARLOTTE, it is not always money that is capable of bestowing happiness:—sain

would he, I dare say, have sacrificed all his darling hoards, to have saved his granddaughter from the grave, and his wife from the poignant grief in which she was plunged : but these calamities are what riches cannot remedy, and all our efforts to console her were vain. — She grew so ill, she was obliged to keep her chamber ; and upon repeated anxious enquiries about her dear child, as she calls her, we were obliged to inform her of her being ill.

Till yesterday, she has pierced all our hearts with her complaints ; but the receipt of two such joyful letters, set us all to rights again ;—and Mr. RAVENSWORTH, as nimble as fifteen, ran up stairs to his wife, to communicate the happy contents of them.

We are now all composed again. — Master TOMMY has really fret more about his cousin, than I thought it possible for him to do on any occasion ; but Miss PATTY seemed not in the least affected ;
and

and when the news came of her niece's recovery, said, with a disdainful toss of her head ; — She never thought there was any danger ; but there was always more fuss about that girl, than if all the family besides were to die.

Her father seemed really shocked at her insensibility : and TOMMY made answer, That as he did not believe his aunt had flesh and blood about her, he could not wonder she had not natural feelings like other folks. — This (considering Miss PAT-
TY's figure, which is literally nothing but skin and bone) was really droll, and made us all laugh ; which put the lady into such a passion, that she told him, she should be sorry to be made of the same materials with such a sapscull as him ; and if he gave her any more of his impudence, she should box his ears, and teach him better manners.

Then by G . d, I'll kick your a . . e, says the young squire, — sapscull, quotha', old

fusty kettle ; I don't know what kind of yellow materials you are made of ; but as for being like me, you may be quite easy, for d . . . I take me, if I was such a stinking tawney as you, if I should not in conscience pack myself out of the world, that I might be no disease to wholesome mortals.

At this speech, Miss PATTY was seized with so violent a rage, that she fell into hysteric fits ; and Mr. RAVENSWORTH, after having reprimanded his grandson, (who sincerely wished she might die, and devoutly prayed they would bury her alive) retired, and left her to the care of HARRIOT, the servants, and myself. She has now again, unfortunately for us, recovered the use of her tongue, and vows revenge on the ungracious squire. This, my dear, is the present state of our affairs. — Adieu, my CHARLOTTE ; and believe me

Most sincerely yours,

H. SEAGROVE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,

To Mrs. RAVENSWORTH.

HOW much am I concerned, my ever honour'd madam, at the affliction you have been in on account of your poor EMILY ; and how great are my obligations to you for it?—Teach me, my dear madam, in what manner I can repay a parent, who loads me with so many undeserved marks of her esteem and tenderness.—Great is my desire to do it, but hard the task to accomplish.—However, tho' it can never be in my power to bestow an adequate return to all your goodness, yet permit me to do it as far as in me lies, by complying with your strict injunctions, to acquaint you as soon as I found the least alteration in my heart and sentiments.

The time is come, my dear madam, when I stand in need of all your kind in-

G 4 indulgence ;

dulgence; determined, as I am, never to bestow my hand without your full approbation, — I remain in the greatest anxiety, till I know my fate from you — But why should I? since I know you will never resolve to make your EMILY miserable.

You will no doubt, with astonishment, ask me, Where, during this interval of time, that I have been both imprison'd and dying, I can have picked up a swain to lose my heart to! — It certainly cannot be that monster lord WILTON. Ah! my good madam, don't think of such a wretch. No — it is to a young gentleman whom fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, if he does not meet with your approbation, I happened to see and converse with at the masquerade. I doubt not, but your prudence will tax me with levity and indiscretion, at being so easily drawn in by outward appearances at first sight. Ah! madam, teach me to be possess'd of your extreme sense and delicacy, and I own
you

you blame me with justice. Yes, I acknowledge I was indeed taken at first sight; but consider, that I am unfortunate enough, not to inherit from the best of parents that judgment and consideration, which were so conspicuously hers from the tenderest years. But think not, that from that interview alone, I have ventured to make you this address. — The young gentleman has since then been the sole cause of my escape from my horrid detainer; — he set me at liberty. — Without him, perhaps, you had never more beheld your beloved child, as you sometimes are kind enough to call me. He ventured his life for my preservation — he has since almost lost it, from anxiety at my dangerous situation. What return I ought to make him you must determine; for me, I know the dictates of my own heart; but they alone must never guide my conduct.

My cousin DICKY too, no longer claims a more than friendly share in my affections.

His

His heart and tenderest sentiments are bestowed on a deserving girl,—a friend of Miss SEAGROVE's—her name DANBY—whose kind assiduities have much assisted my recovery.—She too is fond of him. What pity to part two hearts, united by the softest ties of love and friendship!

The young gentleman, to whom I am obliged for life and liberty, is called BLANCHE; a man of fortune, family, and education. If he has your leave, my cousin RAVENSWORTH intends inviting him down to H..., at our return, which I hope will be soon; for I die with impatience to see you, my grandfather, and the amiable HENRIETTA, again. Cousin TOM too, has no small share of my gratitude and esteem, for the affection he has so kindly testified for me.

We proceed setting off to-morrow for London; and from thence, it will not be long ere we proceed homewards.—I hear it was Mrs. SANDHAM, who was sent with
the

the news of my illness. — She is the lady, madam, whom I mentioned to you in a former letter with pity, for being plagued with a bad husband. — You are a judge of her figure and address; as for the rest, I must assure you, she is both amiable and accomplished. — Being rather wild before she married, and having a mother young enough herself to be jealous of a handsome daughter; she, by making her life miserable at home, and by repeated threats and persuasions, sacrificed her to the monster, who now dares call such a woman, Wife! A wretch not three removes from an idiot; but the worst creature of that species, as he is both a drunken, passionate, and ill-natured fool, that has art enough to persuade the world he makes a good husband, while he uses Mrs. SANDHAM with the most shocking brutality.

I have even heard Mrs. CLATYON say, that he has struck at her: I myself, by living in the family, have heard him call
her

her by the most shocking names. — He cannot disguise himself at home ; but, I fear, he succeeds too well in that respect abroad. He has so prejudiced all her friends and relations against her, that not one of them but Mrs. CLAYTON, have the smallest pity for her. She took me with her one day to Mrs. ANDERSON, her mother's ; but never did I see such treatment of a daughter.

She is a little woman ; has once been tolerably handsome, and has the vanity to think herself so still. — She is rather lame, fat — and has always had an indifferent figure. She received, both Mrs. SANDHAM and me with as much formality, as if she had never seen the former, any more than myself, in her life. After we had been with her some time, she began to grow more free in conversation with me, but was quite upon the reserve with her daughter ; except when she observed, by chance, any thing in her dress or behaviour,

baviour, which she thought gave the least room for ridicule ; a talent she affects to possess in a most eminent degree ; and tho' she does not fail to be sometimes really entertaining with it, yet the motives, which plainly proceed from envy and ill-nature, make that which in another mouth, (who would use it with less bitterness of speech, and vehemence of action) would appear real wit, in her seem scurrilous, tho' clever.

She likewise pretends to be perfectly well read in ancient and modern history, and disputes, with the most learned gentlemen, on the Greek and Latin poets ; tho' she does not understand a word of them. — She says too, she has a talent for languages ; — her own, indeed, she speaks fluently, and having lived some years in France, has given her a perfect knowledge of that tongue : she apes their country manners in every thing, and has an invincible hatred to whatever is English ; and with an indifferent income, sets up
for

for a professed fine lady. Acquaintance she has but few; or she has lost them, by exerting her fine talents (as she calls them) too liberally, in depreciating their no ones; this too is a phrase of her own. — *Voila la portraite de Madame* ANDERSON, mother to Mrs. SANDHAM. — And I am the more particular in my description of her, as you will, in all likelihood, be acquainted with her daughter, whose want of sense she so greatly laments. You will yourself be the judge of Mrs. SANDHAM; and I am desirous, that you be thoroughly acquainted with that mother, who is ashamed of her. She has indeed one fault; which is, that unpardonable one, of being too pretty, too sensible, and too agreeable.

Mrs. CLAYTON says, she was once as lively as myself; but the continual agitation of her spirits at this time, makes her appear quite the reverse. As I wish liberty to all my sex who want it, so do I sincerely wish her blockheadly husband in the

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 93

the church-yard, where, upon his tomb-
stone, I would bestow this inscription :

Here lies

The Body of One, whose Life
Was spent, in doing ill Offices
To all Mankind.

Whose Self, was his GOD ;

And whom,

Had not a righteous and all merciful BEING
thought proper

To take him from this World,
would have

Martyr'd an amiable Wife,
worthy

Of a better Fate.

He was brought up

AN ATTORNEY ;

But providentially, his Idleness
got the better

Of his malevolent Disposition
so far,

That by neglecting Business,

He

He had not
Quite so full a scope for Wickedness,
as if

He had followed a Profession,
Which,

By being in the Hands of
his Fellows,

(If any He had in Villainy)

Has been perverted

To the ruin of many honest Families.

His Time

Was spent abroad, in drinking

And gaming with low Company,

And at home,

In swearing at and beating his Wife.

This is the Character

Of Mr. WILLIAM SANDHAM,

Whose Example,

It is to be hoped, will be followed by Few,

And whose Life

Is regretted by None.

This,

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 97

This, my dear madam, is the epitaph I would give the husband. Was the mother to come under my lash, she would not escape much better.

I fear, you, who do not easily enter into strong prejudices, will be tired with my long animadversions on Mrs. SANDHAM's relations. I beg your pardon, if that should be the case: but my zeal for every fellow female in distress, and my gratitude to her for the concern she shewed on my account, have run away with my ideas, and my pen would follow them.

My cousin DICK interrupts me while I write, and begs his duty, and most respectful love to my grandfather and you. I join him, my dear madam; and pray heaven to prolong the days of such worthy parents, if it deigns to look with an eye of mercy, on your dutifully affectionate grand-daughter,

EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Mrs. RAVENSWORTH—in Answer.

I Received yours, my dear EMMY, which has effectually cured the anxiety of mind, your unlucky accident has so long caused me. I am, my dear girl, now, as well recovered as yourself, and hope soon to see you at home.—I return your candid confession, by assuring you, that as soon as I have enquired into the young gentleman's character and family whom you mention, and find that they answer what I should expect, in a man destined for your husband, you shall have my full consent to follow your own inclinations; and as your obligations to him are so great, I wish as sincerely as you can do, that I may hear a favourable account of him.

Gratitude, my EMILY, is the noblest movement of the soul; and the man who has preserved my child, claims my best
acknow-

acknowledgments ; these he shall receive, when you bring him to H...—Your grandfather too, is willing to indulge you in your choice.—But who is this Miss DANBY, whom you mention DICK RAVENSWORTH to be in love with ? — I remember, formerly I was acquainted with a Mrs. DANBY ; a most worthy woman, whom I ceased to visit when I retired to this country.—If he is determined to marry her, I wish she may be some relation to the lady I mean : daughters, I believe, she has none ; for she was childless when I knew her, and was likely to continue so ; or if not, she could not have any grown to years of maturity. Miss SEAGROVE you will probably see before you do me. Her father fetched her yesterday to town, intending her in marriage for an acquaintance of his, whom she was to receive as her declared lover, the moment she got home.

The poor girl looked so thunderstruck at the news Mr. SEAGROVE told her, that

I was seized with the greatest compassion; at the unhappy posture of her affairs; and when she left the room, to pack up her things, endeavoured all in my power to dissuade him from forcing the young lady's inclinations: Mr. RAVENSWORTH too advised him to take milder measures. — But in vain; he, poor man, is very headstrong, and determined to act as he thinks proper.

I fear in the end, it will fall on his own head; as all perverse people, generally, are the greatest sufferers by their folly. When Miss SEAGROVE was ready, he took her off; and we are now, more than ever, in want of our dear EMILY to bear us company. Poor HENNY was really a worthy girl, and of so mild a temper, that she ought not to be treated harshly. Endeavour to see her in London, and render her all the comfort in your power.

Your grandfather has thought proper to recall your Aunt PEGGY, whom he has banished his presence these ten years, for marrying

marrying Mr. EVELYN, a man without either fortune or family, to recommend him to an alliance with ours.—I have often endeavoured to persuade him to a reconciliation, but never could succeed till now : when taking an opportunity to shew him the injustice of interceding with Mr. SEAGROVE for his daughter, when he had so long bore a resentment to one of his own for a crime, which he declared, he should not wonder if Miss SEAGROVE was to commit : time, and my intreaties, have at length softened his anger, and he has permitted me to write to her, which I intend to do by this post. Adieu, my love ; believe me yours affectionately,

ELIZABETH RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XL.

Lord WILTON to Sir ROBERT BOYLE.

ROT it, BOB, what a fellow are you ? Advise me to give up a girl that I love, and who is kind to me, for the sake

of a confounded jilt, that brings nothing but plague and confusion along with her. Revenge ! with all my heart — that I thirst after as much as thou could'st wish, and would spare no pains to get her again into my clutches, from whence if she ever escapes scot free, may I be posted for an ass, thro' every coffee-house in town. — But why, in the d . . . l's name, can't I in the mean time comfort myself with a little bewitching angel, whom I would keep, even if married to EMILY RAVENSWORTH ; than to whom, were it not for her fortune, I would sooner be linked to the infernal HECATE. — No — no, BOB, I never give up a wench, till I am tired of her ; for which reason have contrived, without thy MACHIAVELIAN head, to carry KITTY to my country seat at B . . .

Oh ! thou puppy, and do'st thou really think there's no merit in conquering such a virtuous little rustic ? — A Nun ! or a Dutchess ! — a pretty conquest, truly. —

Why,

Why, thou head of the WRONGHEADS, dost thou not know that the virtue of an hundred of them, would not weigh with the simple uninformed modesty of one rural lass. — I would undertake to triumph over a dozen Dutchesfies, and a whole convent of nuns, before I had advanced the least step towards the ruin of a farmer's daughter.

Wilt thou set thy myrmidons at work? That's right, BOB; for that I'll thank thee; and if thou wilt meet me in London, we will undertake some project for the recovery of that little fury; and we will carry her to thy country house: for she must not come near my KITTY — the poor thing would break her heart, if she thought I entered into any other engagements.

I believe she really has the vanity to think, I will make her my lady WILTON. She pipes from morning till night, about what her father and mother will suffer from her loss. — 'Tis a good-natured little soul; and, egad, I love her better than I ever

yet did any of her sex. — Oh ! how should I enjoy the thoughts of marrying that b . . . h EMILY, and bringing a mistress under her nose ; but KITTY would not do for that. — I would have a girl of spirit, that would teize the lady a little, and assist me in my wished revenge : — one that would match her ladyship for insolence, and fight with her when the quarrel rose high ; for, I do believe, the jade would box any thing that opposed her will.

Don't you think, BOB, this revenge would be glorious ? — To humble that proud spirit by repeated mortifications ! — Oh ! I anticipate the joyful event. — Adieu, my lad — success attend

Your friend,
WILTON.

LETTER XLI.

Sir ROBERT BOYLE to Lord WILTON.

WHAT a strange wayward jade is that same dame Fortune ! — You have been seeking after a fortune, with the incum-

incumbrance of a wife tacked to it, for so long; have gone thro' so much trouble, got wounded, and pestered to death, without having yet accomplished your end: while I, unthinking of any such chance, wishing all wives at the d...l, and all men foolish enough to enter into the noose--cuckolds—have a fine girl with 20,000l. drops into my arms without the seeking.

Hey-day! — D...n the fellow, says CHARLES — what fabulous story has he picked up now to din my ears with, when I want his advice in more serious matters? Not you, indeed CHARLES; charity begins at home. — I have now cards of my own to play, and must attend to them, before I can think upon your less material concerns.

Now, CHARLES, I think I can keep thee in suspense a little. — Now do'st thou begin to curse, bite thy lips, and flatter, in order to be made acquainted with the glorious circumstances of twenty thousand pounds.

pounds.—She's no EMILY, CHARLES.—Mild as the summer breezes!—her soft accents thrill thro' one's soul, and give a full idea of Elysium. But how the d... I got you this girl, BOB? Why I got her, CHARLES—I won't tell you yet—she is tall—straight—handsome—her skin the most beautiful alabaster,—with eyes as black as sloes, and hair of the finest jet. Around her lips play wantonly a thousand dimpled CUPIDS—Oh! I shall grow poetical in her praise, and make thee curse thy dull stars, that did not throw the fortune in thy way.

And did'st thou ever suppose that thou could'st equal the glorious destiny designed for me, CHARLES?—Pshaw, man, thou never hadst my talents for intrigue—my person—my address!—d... n it, thou wert always but a boy in comparison of my noble achievements. But still, say you, this is not coming to the point.—Curse the fellow—I think his head is turned—

he

he cannot talk rationally. — Oh, ho, — can't I, my wife lord WILTON? — but if I can't, twenty thousand pounds can, and very rationally too, for a needy baronet, with scarce a foot of land: — a circumstance, by the by, my little deary's relations are by no means acquainted with. They think, I suppose, the estate is in *statu quo* — As it was when old dad and them used to meet together: — but I know the value of it too well, not to put it to it's proper use.

Still foreign to the purpose — thou still keep'st me in the dark, BOB. — Well then, thou poor dog, I will at last take compassion upon thee, and let thee into the mystery. — Know then — that formerly, there subsisted a firm and lasting friendship between old Sir RICHARD BOYLE and Mr. SEAGROVE, — a man of fortune, part of whose estate adjoined to ours. — He it seems was troubled with a little daughter, whose soft soul melted away at the flames
of

of one Captain CROSBY : — A gentleman, to whom her dad bore implacable enmity. This set his wits to work to break off their connection ; and he sent the girl down to H . . . , to be with your EMILY, (and thereby hangs a tale, CHARLES, which may be useful) while in the mean time he sought out a proper husband for her.

After having cast about for some time, he recollected his worthy old friend had a son — doubtless as worthy as himself — upon which, he enquired if he was in England ; and being answered in the affirmative, paid me a visit, and offered, for the friendship he bore my father, to bestow the young lady upon his son. — This is the sum total. — Miss was sent for home. — I pay daily homage at the shrine of this little VENUS, and in spite of the aversion I must own she has for me, she must become my lady BOYLE.

As I told thee before, CHARLES, she is all gentleness ; so, when I am tired of her,
I can

I can break her heart in a month at least : Indeed it seems to be nigh done to my hands, for the old fellow is devilish cross with her, and the mother is kept in near as great awe as the daughter. She has twenty thousand pounds down, and all the fortune at her parents death (whom I shall deceive with a false settlement) falls to her share ; how soon that blessed event happens, you may be sure I don't care.

Miss begs, I would not marry her against her inclination ; and I swear, it is impossible to live without her ; and hope, after marriage, I shall induce her to think better of me. I am in no fear of an absolute refusal from her, as I am sure she dare not disobey her father. — And now for a word of thy affairs.

Depend upon it, as your EMILY and my intended are acquainted, and know nothing of my intimacy with you, it will be the easiest thing in nature to get her again into your power. — Meet me in London, where

where I am at present; and depend upon it, it sha'n't be long, ere you are once more master of the jade, and in full possession of all your wishes; which, as I am in a fair way of being happy myself, I don't care if I assist you in the enjoyment of; and with a full pardon for all thy atrocious offences against me, in despising my MACHIAVELIAN counsels, I conclude myself, thy sincere friend,

ROBERT BOYLE.

LETTER XLII.

MISS MARTHA RAVENSWORTH,
To Mrs. EVELYN.

I Sincerely rejoice, my dear PEGGY, that my obstinate old father has, at length, consented to forgive, and receive you again into his house and protection. I wanted your assistance, to invent with me some scheme for the ruin of our detested EMILY, and the crew she favours; she has been
run

run away with, and near dying, as I told you in a former letter, but is now recovered, and on her way home. Oh ! why is she suffered to return, to make us still feel the effects of our father's partiality. — Would that old man were dead ; — devoutly have I been praying it these twenty years ; — but he is doomed to live, that I may be unhappy and dependant.

Were it not for the large sums and presents I draw from their darling EMILY, I should not have money for the most trifling pocket expences.

But she is such a fool, as always to be furnishing her worst enemy with what she most wants. After all the bustle they make about her fine talents and understanding, I remain of opinion, she is very little above the degree of a downright idiot ; nay, I have known some the world has favoured with that appellation, with ten times her sense. — She certainly must know I hate her, and that I would spare no pains

to

to do her every prejudice in my power ; and yet she will give me any thing I ask ; almost quarrel with the old fool my father, in order to procure me what I have occasion for ; and when I am ill, she testifies as much unfeigned concern for me, as if I was her best friend.

What is all this but the height of weakness ? — No, no, I cannot be persuaded, I am sure she must want sense extremely. — She is always open to deceit ; and 'tis by hypocrisy that I must accomplish my revenge. — I wish I could again betray her into lord WILTON's power. — How should I rejoice if he would address himself to me. — I could not then, I think, fail of my desired end. But he should by no means marry her : — I should die at the thoughts of seeing her my lady WILTON ; that would make her, if possible, more insolent than ever.

Suppose I persuaded him, she had no independant fortune, and that it was only
a false

a false report raised, to get her a noble husband. My life on't, he would then be in no hurry to swallow the matrimonial pill ; and how should I glory in seeing her pride reduced, by the absolute loss of character, and consequently of friends or acquaintance.

Of what use then would be her independant fortune ? — When her lord was tired of her, she would become the out-cast of the world, despised by her own sex, and treated with insolence by the other. — How rapturous the thought ! — I am half inclined to write to lord WILTON ; but I'll stay till you come to H . . . and consult with you about it. I am sorry your child's illness should detain you from us so long ; perhaps it will be yet a month ere I can see you, and before that time this paragon of our family will be returned.

Oh ! that I could likewise get rid of this booby TOM. — He is a wretch too, that my soul detests ; but not so worthy

of revenge as t'other. He, perhaps, may be inveigled to marry one of the maid-servants, and then his ruin is compleat. As for that little canting piece of sobriety, Miss SEAGROVE, I have done her business, by writing a letter to her father, acquainting him, that she was constantly visited by Captain CROSBY.—Upon which, he immediately sought out a husband of his own chusing, and has carried Miss away to London, to force her directly into a marriage with one she detests.—Little do our good family think what I have done; but I have other tricks to shew them yet; tho' I will always endeavour to manage them so artfully, as to remain wholly unsuspected; and by that means, I shall at last, perhaps, work myself into my father's favour, and gain a better fortune after his death than I could otherwise expect.

Indeed there is no doubt, but when his grand-children are removed, he will behave more generously to us. As for my
nephew

nephew DICK, he will, I think, ruin himself with the old man, for he is so very extravagant, that he will soon spend all his own fortune, and then, I'm sure, his grandfather will trust none of his darling hoards in his possession. — I always pretend to be prodigiously saving and frugal, which, I believe, turns the scale greatly in my favour. Adieu, PEGGY — make haste to visit us; and in the mean time write often. — I can now trust my letters to the post by a servant, which I was formerly obliged to put in myself, as I have got full permission to correspond with you.

You say your little girl has the small-pox; but I think the sooner you could leave her, and come away, the better, for fear the old gentleman should change his mind again: besides, my mother has never had that disorder, and if you could contrive to bring a little of the infection along with you — it might be a means of dispatching one moiety of our old tyrant

however — and then, perhaps, t'other half
would the sooner decay. Once more,
adieu, and believe me your sincere friend,
and affectionate sister,

MARTHA RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XLIII.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,

To Mrs. RAVENSWORTH.

WE have at length, my dear ma-
dam, reached London, and are
so much nearer our wishes of revisiting
our ever honoured parents. I am per-
fectly well recovered of my illness; but I
believe (tho' nobody dare tell me so) that
the traces of it are still very visible—
for my glass, which is the honestest truth-
teller about me, (no great compliment to
my friends, you'll say) too plainly makes me
sensible of the alteration.—Never mind,
my dear madam, I am good enough still
to make a wife on; and as I intend to
dwindle

dwindle into that sober animal some time or other, the change is not material.

Will you forgive the stile of your giddy EMILY, my honoured grandmama? Indeed she had forgot to whom she was addressing such saucy sentiments; but your goodness makes it unnecessary for me to strike them out again. To proceed then with my tale—which is only meant to prepare you for seeing your EMILY, both thinner and paler than usual, a circumstance, I know would, without a preface, be sufficient to alarm your indulgent tenderness; I doubt not, but a short time will restore me.

I have, since my return to Mrs. CLAYTON's, been visited by—a married man—in every sense of the word.—Perhaps you have heard of his being so; but it was a piece of news I was first acquainted with by himself.

If you knew of the wedding, you will easily guess who I mean; if not, I will give you a month to guess in—at the end

of which time, you will not I am sure be a bit nearer the mark, than you are at present. — An old admirer of mine — he was so humble, so adoring, so sighing, so constant. — Ah! who would have thought the youth could have proved false to his repeated vows and solemn oaths, never to out-live my cruelty? — Really, madam, after all, these men are a strange, fickle kind of beings. — I think I had better determine to have nothing at all to do with them. — But then to be an old Maid! Shocking! the very sight of that dreadful word makes me shudder. — No, I fear I must venture.

Forgive me, madam; don't scold your EMILY, for keeping you thus in suspense with her impertinence. — The pen is in fault, I think — I don't know what's the matter with it, but it will write nonsense whether I will or not; — shall I throw it away, and take another? — There — it's done. — And now for the fickle swain.

His name is — HARDING. — No other than my poor dying dismal — tired of living

ing a batchelor, I suppose, and fearing that Time might lay his rude claws upon his smooth front, before I permitted myself to be wooed into compliance; resolved no longer to indulge the mortifying thought, and to chace away all such fears, has wedded thirty thousand pounds. — A good comfortable kind of match. And now for an account of the visit.

He came to Mrs. CLAYTON's; where enquiring for me, he was introduced into the parlour. — Your servant, Mr. HARDING. — Ma'am, your most obedient humble servant: — I am sorry to hear — hem, hem — of the unlucky accident, which has deprived your friends so long of your agreeable conversation. — I dare say, Sir, your sorrow has been extreme. — I fear it has been injurious to your health — you look extremely ill. — You have lost none of your usual pleasantry, I find, Miss EMILY. — I am glad you think it a pleasant subject, Mr. HARDING; I should look

upon it in quite another light. — What, Ma'am? — Why, your being in a bad state of health. — I did not tell you, Ma'am, that I looked upon that in a very pleasant light; I meant to say, that you still retained your usual spirits. — Why should I not, Sir? I'm not married yet. — Still in a stile of raillery, Miss RAVENSWORTH? (little did I imagine, I was touching the gentleman so home.) Why raillery, Mr. HARDING? I only spoke matter of fact. — When you are married, Miss RAVENSWORTH, you will not, perhaps, think it quite so ludicrous a subject. — Bless me! — why you speak as if you were really touched by it! A married man, could not seem more feelingly affected. — Very well, Ma'am, I see by your affected ignorance, you are determined to make yourself merry at my expence. Affected ignorance! pray, Mr. HARDING, explain; there is certainly some mystery hid beneath these words. — Ay, ay, explain,

plain, Sir, explain—then became the general cry.—Why, good people, says he, I need not explain that I am married, I suppose, since you are all so perfectly well acquainted with it.—Married! married!—then re-echoed all of us—upon my word, this is the first news we ever heard of it.—Indeed, Sir, says I, I take it extremely ill you should prove inconstant to me; and in the very time too, when I was seriously thinking about entering into that sober state.—At this, Mr. BLANCHE turned first pale and then red—I hope the thing is not troubled with jealousy—And I continued reproaching Mr. HARDING, in the most ludicrous terms, for his cruelty in disappointing me:—the scene closed, by our all wishing him joy.

He married Miss MEADOWS, a lady about fifty; the most ugly, ill-natured old maid, that was ever known; and from the most fusty old virgin, she is turned into as very a wife, as he is a husband. She has
a whole

a whole train of relations, with a superannuated old mother at the head of them, whom she keeps to live in the house with her, and whenever he offends her, (which indeed it is scarce possible for any one to avoid) they all open upon him together, and drive the poor man out of his own house for shelter, to any one that will harbour him against their fury, and listen to his woeful lamentations, while they keep full and peaceable possession; and when their clappers are tired, amuse themselves with playing at half-penny Quadrille, or Loue, at two-pence a dozen counters. — DICK, not knowing then that he was so dismally hen-pecked, asked his leave to wish the bride joy; adding, that as he was so great an admirer of music, they might have a little concert before we left town: but poor JERRY shook his head, said, his wife had the misfortune to have weak nerves, and could not bear the sound of any instrument in the house. — What a mortification

mortification must this be to a man, who is never easy, but when within hearing of a violin or harpsichord?

After having stood a little more raillery from both DICKY and me, he took his leave, desiring to be kindly remembered to my grand-papa and you.—To have done with him——

Amongst the rest, Mrs. SANDHAM is more than commonly rejoiced at my miraculous recovery.—I don't know why it is, but indeed I have taken an unaccountable prepossession in favour of that agreeable woman.—I have strenuously invited her with me to H... , but her bear won't let her comply with it; knowing his own want of attractions, he is too jealous to trust her out of his sight, except when his low company and liquor get the better of his passion for plaguing her.

He and I have sometimes high battles; and, I believe, he wishes me his wife for a day, that he might have the pleasure of beating

beating me.—In such a case, I should be very tame, I dare say—may be I might—but it would be after having procured him the best basting he ever had in his life.—Poor Mrs. SANDHAM is so oppressed by the ill usage of her relations, joined to his brutality, that she is almost frightened out of her wits, whenever he appears.

She has, I think, gained a conquest; and one who, if her husband was dead, would, I dare say, use her better.—He too is a fickle admirer of mine—I mean, Mr. OAKHAM.—He often visits her, and his regards are always so totally fixed upon her, that he seems to have no eyes for any thing else before him.

You see, my dear madam, what mortifications I endure:—I must be obliged to take Mr. BLANCHE, while he is in the mind; lest I am forced to die a virgin of necessity, which would, you know, be a most lamentable event.—This pen is beginning to grow as unruly, I fear, as the
other;

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 125

other; so, my dear madam, while it is in any kind of order, I will conclude myself,

Your most dutiful and affectionate

EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

P. S. I have called two or three times upon Miss SEAGROVE, since I came to town; but was always told she was out. I intend going again to-morrow:—I long to know how that sweet girl bears up under her afflictions.

L E T T E R XLIV.

THOMAS RAVENSWORTH, Esq;

TO RICHARD RAVENSWORTH, Esq;

I Writes this, cousin DICK, to let you know, that I've just tired out of my life; and if you and EMMY doant soon cum to beer me company, I mun be forced to pack off againe for faither's. Mrs. HORNBY has fetcht away Miss HARIOT, and I've nobody to talk to, but that beldam,

beldam, Aunt MARTHA, and th' auld foaks. — I desire yowd bring me with you from London, sum sort of an imbroyder'd waifcoat, after your own fance, (for I thinks as how, you hav a woundy fine one) and six pare of silk stockings.

There has been a confounded dust about turning away our WILLIAM the butler. Old SquareTose found him out, in stealing wine and brandy, when he was sent to fetch it out ot fellar; so ever sins, no body but myself have been trusted to go down. He was for turning him away directly, but auld PATT pleded so hard for him, that he was forgivn. I'll uphould you, I was plagy sorry for it, for hese a divlish impudent feller, and tells every thing that every body does.

I was in a soar mind for having him turn'd of, but she got better of me, by tellin t'aud man that he wad never get a sarvant at wad dres his Issthas so well agen; and so that made t'aud fellow keep him.

Howsomever, I could not help telling her a bit of my mind; and so I said, that I fancied she had a yuse for him herself, or she wad never be so damned considerit about her faither, whoa, to my sartin sure nolege, I new she hated. She called me some sort of an outlandish quere name — a Hotty-pot, I believe; and ask'd me, what filthy idese I'd got in my perry-canny now. But I kept her up to't; Filthy yourself, yow aud cat; ise lay owt at all naw, that you have the most nastiest thowts of the too, with your Frensh gibbrish. What's here to do, know you. — I say agen, you hav moar occashon for him to kis your witherd chaps, than to dres your faither's isshas—you weasend hagg. — Cease your impartenance, you brute you, says the tallow fased gipsy, or you will driv me mad. — Mad, ai marry, says I, 'twere a goodly dede; I wad it was i'my pour, I sad soun do that for you, 'twad be a dedly lucky way to get rid o you.

Go,

Go, you wick of HENDER, says I, and giv suk to the young imps that hant you, and doant com trublin me with your stuf. She colld me a fu moar names; but by jingo, I maid her budg, for all the aud man's meddling—he's alwas snubbin me, I think, for taulking to that fusty aud b . . . h.

I relly thinks 'twere long on her, that Miss HARIOT were feched away; she was alwes plaging the poor thing. I have a woundy moind to tak mysel to that yung wumman. I nede not matter frends consent of beans straw, you now, for I fall haiv a gud estait one time or other; thof for the matter o'that, their can be no gret harm in askin them; one can but be denied; and I doant cair a button-top for that.

I intends to pay her visit soon, for Curnel HORNBY desirde he mite hav the pleasure of seeing me; but, I beleev, it wad bee better to hav some fine claife first.

I kno

I kno thes south-country lasses is woundy fond of drefs; and I thinks as how, it is a great set of to a yung man of a gud prefens. I hav ordered a handsum bagwig, and I am to were it with a solitary like yours. Black will suite my complexion; and I begin not to fancy these little bobs, Ise always yused to were, they look so like a traidesman, the lasses tell me.

Ecod, I forgot to acquante you, that our aud plaig catch'd me kissing MARY t'other day; and wad you think it, she was never a bit angry, but said, MARY was a pritty girl, and wou'd make a very gud wife to sumbody; but that I owt not to gane the lasses hart, for fere of maikin her refuse a gud mach, when it was offer'd. Ise sure, I staid like a stuc pig, for thowt of nowt less than a long string of naims and abuse—but MARY semes to be a grete favorit of hers — she is alwas crackin what a tite handy las she is, and to be sure she mun be so, if such a canker'd piefe of guds as her can think so. — Fathe, POLL's

VOL. II.

K

a pritty

a pritty little filly to play with—I have had a botch at kissing with her several times, but shes so plagy coy there's no getting any fens into her; tho' she tould GRACY tother day, that I was the properest young man she ever feed; and Ant PATT tould it me agane. I wish to the lord HARRY, DICK, you wad make one among us agane.—I longs too to see little EMMY, after all her trubbles and ilness; and I sud be vastly glad to know, how that pritty yung laidy dus that was luv-sic—Miss SEGROV, I mene. Do rite, DICK, and tell me sum nuse, to kepe me in hart till I see you. And beleve me

Your loving cussin,

THOMAS RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XLV.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,

To Mrs. RAVENSWORTH.

OH! my dear madam, I am in the utmost concern.—You know, in my

my last, I told you, I believed Mrs. SANDHAM had made a conquest; little did I think, Mr. OAKHAM had done the same. Yet how can one wonder? — From such a husband, who would not be delivered? — But then the manner! — oh! I am half distracted. — If she had poisoned him, I could have forgiven her; but to give the wretch such cause of triumph — Bless me — how could she be so weak? — To keep you no longer in suspense, madam — Soon after you received my last letter, Mr. SANDHAM and his wife had a quarrel, in which she was certainly right. After having abused her with many shocking appellations, he rose up, and before any of us could prevent him, struck her such a blow on the breast, that she fainted away, and fell to the ground: — I went first to her assistance, as he was going to strike at her again, and in the scuffle have got a black arm.

Mr. BLANCHE and my cousin RAVENSWORTH then seized upon the monster,

and held him, while we endeavoured to raise his wife.

In the midst of our confusion, in came Mr. OAKHAM.—Never did I see love, rage, and compassion, all at once actuate the countenance so strongly.—He went up to Mrs. SANDHAM, took her hand, turn'd pale, trembled, then asked the cause of her disorder; which I, in too great rage to be restrained, immediately informed him of, with the most bitter invectives against the wretched cause. His face then kindled into the highest crimson; flying up to SANDHAM, he took him by the collar, and after kicking him about the room for a considerable time, without either of the gentlemen offering to oppose it, or even the (then meek) coward himself, insisted upon his quitting the room, and undergoing the same discipline in the street. To this the wretch made some resistance, and at last burst into tears; saying, he never used his dear wife ill in his life before;

fore ; that he would ask her pardon on his knees ; and that he should not have gone so far, but that he was provoked to think she should be led away by the ill advice of Miss RAVENSWORTH.

At this my cousin DICK went up, and pulled him by the nose ; and Mr. BLANCHE drawing his sword, said, Miss RAVENSWORTH should never be ill spoke of in his presence, with impunity ; and insisted upon his fighting. — This young OAKHAM opposed, as doing him too much honour ; as did likewise master DICKY : and Mrs. CLAYTON put an end to the dispute, by desiring them, one and all, to kick him out of the room.

He said, he would not quit the house, without his dear wife with him. She being just recovered enough to hear these last words, conjured us in the most moving terms to protect her ; and he, all at once changing his note, d . . n . d her for an infernal b . . . h, who had been the ruin of

him, and swore he would send her to hell. — At this, the gentlemen no longer hesitated, and he was effectually kicked out of the house.

Upon examining Mrs. SANDHAM's breast, we found it so dangerously hurt, that it was absolutely necessary to send for a surgeon; who, upon examining it, said it might be of bad consequence. Indeed, I never saw a more shocking blow: the anguish of it was attended with a slight fever, which confined her two days to her bed. When she ventured down stairs again, the first thing she heard was her vile husband asking for her at the door, which near threw her into the same situation again.

In vain we assured her, the servants durst not let him in; it was a considerable time before we could quiet her fears; nor should we, I believe, have succeeded, had not young OAKHAM entered to our assistance. At the sight of him, her countenance brightened up, and she became in better spirits.

Mrs. CLAYTON was engaged out that afternoon : — I was to have gone with her, but had put it off to attend the sick lady. Cousin DICKY went with Mrs. CLAYTON, and Mr. BLANCHE was not that day of our party.

Mr. OAKHAM then was left with us two females ; and I, having often occasion to leave the room, gave this young man, I fear, but too great opportunity to plead his suit ; for the next day she disappeared, and neither him nor her have since been heard of.

This, my dear madam, is my present subject of affliction ; this is the too fatal effect of having bad relations. — The poor thing, I suppose, dreaded to return home, and be at the absolute mercy of her wicked husband : she could not always remain with Mrs. CLAYTON ; and her nearest relations, who ought undoubtedly to have concerned themselves in her welfare, were assisting, with the fool she unfortunately

married, in oppressing her with injuries. Few families, it is to be hoped, are of their way of thinking; if they are, the Lord have mercy upon poor young creatures, who are at the mercy of such inhuman spirits.

Mrs. CLAYTON, who tenderly loves her cousin, is plunged in despair at this rash step; and has been to wait upon Mrs. ANDERSON; who says, She now gives her up for ever.—Good God!—when did she do otherwise—and this too an only daughter.—Thank heaven, that has so happily disposed of me, with such excellent and worthy parents.

Vexed as I was, I could not refrain from laughing at Mrs. ANDERSON's so formally renouncing her—her to whom she never did the smallest service in her life.—Nay, even refused to let her live in the house with her, without a most extortioning and unheard of premium for her board. I heard my friend MARIA say, that she
once

once went with Mrs. SANDHAM to Mrs. ANDERSON's, on an afternoon visit, with other company, when a party was proposed that evening for VAUXHALL. They were to go from this mother's house. — The daughter, being full dressed, had no cloak with her; and fearing the evening might turn cold, begged her mamma would lend her one to take with her. — This was refused. She never lent things, she said, as she really could not wear them after other people. The consequence was, Mrs. SANDHAM caught a violent cold, which confined her to the house a considerable time. *Voilà une mere.*

Thus circumstanced with regard to relations, all of which are of a piece with this inhuman one; and such a husband, if any body may be excused so desperate an action, it is the unfortunate lady in question. Had she possessed an independant fortune, or a relation, who to that title would have joined the name of friend, she would,

would, I dare believe, have acted differently. However, the deed is done, and I can but lament the loss of so agreeable a friend and companion.

The young gentleman's friends are all in the highest consternation, as he was a lad of high expectancies; and has, I fear, given great pain to a worthy family. I think there is little but affliction in this world; and those that don't sustain evils for themselves, have them to bear for other people: for I, who possess every blessing my heart could wish, am still perpetually wretched by the distresses of my friends and fellow-creatures.

My poor dear HENNY, tho' last, not least in my esteem—I have seen her.—She persuaded her father's wretched choice to wait upon me, and introduce me to her sight; as her parents had ordered the servants to deny her to all visitors but Sir ROBERT BOYLE—the name of her intended husband.—He came according to her

her desire, and brought me from her a few lines, to testify it was such.

As he was a stranger, I did not care to go alone with him ; so persuaded MARIA to accompany me.—Mr. SEAGROVE seemed surprized at our entrance.—Sir ROBERT introduced us as his acquaintance.—The lovely HENNY looked emaciated beyond measure ; and for the first time in her life, appeared pleased with the thing intended for her lord—and master. You never saw, ma'am, a more horrid figure.—He is a little, fat, bloated monster, about thirty—his face is carbuncled, so as to render it dangerous to come near so fiery a phenomenon—his eyes are little, grey, sunk about half a foot into his head—his nose made of rather (if possible) more combustible materials than his face—his mouth is of the true sparrow kind, and when he grins, betrays too visibly the bad furniture within ; for he seems not to have a sound tooth in his head.

This is the picture of Sir ROBERT BOYLE, Bart. intended as a husband to the sweetest creature eyes ever beheld.—I arose, and went to the window.—Miss SEAGROVE followed me.—I in a whisper asked her, What she would have me do for her, and in what manner she proposed to act?—She desired, I would inform Captain CROSBY of her distress.—I promised that I would;—and think, you, my ever honoured madam, will not disapprove the performance of it. I further asked her, If she would determine to run away? A thing, I really would advise her to. But the coming up of the frightful Sir ROBERT, prevented her giving me an answer. Were it not for her, I should ere now have been in the country, but would fain stay, and endeavour to be serviceable to a girl, who stands in so much need of my assistance.

When I return, I propose bringing with me a Miss DANYERS, whose story I will acquaint

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 141

acquaint you with more at large. — She has had the misfortune to disoblige her friends, and all Mrs. CLAYTON's intercessions, who has taken unwearied pains to that end, cannot effect a reconciliation. Here is a fresh instance of the cruelty of relations; how happy am I in mine! — Adieu, my dear and ever honoured madam; may heav'n preserve me your esteem, and it cannot fail of bestowing happiness on your most dutiful and respectfully affectionate

EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER XLVI.

Sir ROBERT BOYLE to Lord WILTON.

NOW, the d . . . I take thee, CHARLES. Thou booby — were it any body else but thee, I myself should be tempted to carry off so rich a prize, and leave the little puny HENRIETTA to the winds and tides. Thou can'st not surely be at a loss to guess my meaning. — Rot thy KITTY,
what

what a fuss thou mak'st about that silly piece of rusticity; while the handsome, lively, angelic (yes, angelic let me call her) EMILY, waits but for thy arrival, to be delivered into thy possession.—What a happy fellow wilt thou be, CHARLES? Egad, she's a piece for an emperor.—What the d... I could'st thou be doing? to have her so long in thy power and not—hey, CHARLES?

Oh! thou insensible ass—she might well escape from thee.—But, I think, thou told'st me that before she escaped, she made it her constant practice to turn thee into ridicule.—Why, how the d... I could she help it?—Could not thy stupid block find out, that she must think thee a devilish driveller to continue so long in the same house, with so much corn, wine, and oil in thy custody, and never once attempt to taste it, by way of comforting thyself for all the pains and trouble it cost thee in the gathering.

But

But thou had'st got a foolish, puling,
farmer's daughter in thy head, forsooth,
and preferred the rural innocence of a
country girl, to the ripe blooming beauties
of the finest woman eyes ever beheld —
Ah, CHARLES—

All-seeing PHOEBUS

Ne'er saw her match, since first

His course began.

Oh! what a falling off is here! I could
curse thee for thy stupidity. I have seen
her indeed — and to see is to admire.

My little dove (beyond my warmest
hopes) desired that I would fetch and in-
troduce her at old Snap-shorto's, who has
forbid the reception of any company but
myself, and whom I chuse to bring, till
after his daughter's marriage: — and for
that purpose wrote a note, which I
carried. — How was I struck at first sight,
with the penetrating eye, and charming
toute ensemble, of the little HEBE.

I delivered her my deary's note; but
the little jade would not trust herself alone
with

with me; so we had the company of a married lady, one Mrs. CLAYTON, with us. After the usual time of visiting, she took her leave, and by her own desire, I am to call often, and take her to her friend.

You see by this, that time must give us an opportunity, and that ere long, of restoring her to thy wishes and revenge: if thou can'st be such an insensible, as to desire any from such a bewitching little angel.

I fancy in about a week more, these dilatory lawyers will have finished the settlements, which bestow on thy friend the title of husband to HENRIETTA SEAGROVE.—Egad, I wish it was over, for I am weary of playing the lover, and long to be handling the cash.—Ah! the dear chink of twenty thousand pounds.—Adieu, CHARLES; our affairs go on swimmingly.—Make haste, and put yourself into a fair way of crowning your wishes, by immediately rendring yourself on the field
of

of action, where thou wilt find ever ready
to assist thee, thy sincere friend,

ROBERT BOYLE.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,

To Mrs. RAVENSWORTH.

I Have seen my dear HENNY several times,
since I wrote last to my ever honoured
grand-mama. — According to her desire,
I sent for Captain CROSBY, and told him
to write to the distressed fair one, and I
would convey it safe into her hands. — A
pretty sort of a go-between character I
have taken up, I think. — He did accord-
ingly send a few words of comfort to her ;
which I delivered without being perceived,
the next time Sir ROBERT thought proper
to pay me a visit, and take me to my friend.

He is practising against he turns hus-
band, you see ; so convenient a lover, can-
not fail to make an in-dul-gent helpmate.

VOL. II.

L

I had

I had a curious dispute with Mr. SEAGROVE that same day.—He asked me, When I intended to make a match on't with cousin DICKY?—I answered, When the whim took me in the head to be tired of liberty, I might in the splenetic fit, perhaps, throw myself into that desperate state of Ma-tri-mo-ny—but while I kept a sound understanding, with a small share of regard for my own proper self, I should most religiously avoid breaking that commandment, which says, “Thou shalt not lye.”

He said, That was odd kind of talking for a young lady whose duty, he thought, it was to obey her parents; and that the fifth commandment was of as much consequence as any of the rest.

Sir, replied I, I suppose, if one's parents command one to commit murder, it is no breach of the commandment to be disobedient in such a case; and why they should have a right to make one lye, more than kill,

kill, is a point of argument which requires some sophistry to support. — How lye, Miss EMILY ?

Why, throughout the whole, Mr. SEAGROVE — We'll suppose, for instance, that your daughter was going to be married to Sir ROBERT BOYLE — the supposition, I own, is absurd — but, however, let it remain for argument's sake. — In such a case, when the priest denounces the heaviest judgment upon you, if you know any cause or just impediment against the marriage, and do not declare it; would you have her to answer, before God, she knew of none ? — No ; her reply must certainly be this :

“ I appeal to Sir ROBERT's countenance, and your own understanding, Sir, whether I know of an impediment or not ; that may, I think, bear conviction with it, without my declaring that I know several more.” — Now, how your daughter could avoid all this confession, at the very first

starting, without being guilty of perjury, I can't conceive; and then to promise, to love, honour, and obey, an unconsequential being, who could not exact reverence from a shoe-black. I need go no further, to prove to you the shocking impropriety and wickedness of marrying, to please our parents only.

Upon my word, Miss EMILY, says Sir ROBERT, rather disconcerted, you are very severe: — I am sure, if I was happy enough to obtain Miss SEAGROVE for a wife, I should endeavour to make her as good a husband as possible. Oh! as for that matter, Sir ROBERT, returned I, I am only saying what answer, a lady of Miss HENNY's sentiment and feelings, must make at the altar. As to myself, I don't know but you might do well enough, for the use the generality of the women would put you to; and indeed my dear HENNY, was she to marry you, would be obliged to be at the trouble of furnishing you with antlers, in
order

order to bring you to any sort of decent appearance.

Pray, Miss EMILY, says Mr. SEAGROVE, don't you look upon adultery as a breach of the commandments? — Oh! Sir, return'd I, that is so unfashionable a commandment, that ever since parents have taken to themselves the unnatural right of sacrificing their own flesh and blood, wives have taken the privilege of crowning their spouses brows, in order, as I told you before, to make their appearance a little more tolerable.

After a little more disputing, in which, I think, I had rather the advantage, we dropped the subject; and I found an opportunity of delivering HARRY CROSBY's letter to the poor destined victim, who was to be delivered up at the shrine of the altar, to be destroyed by the never-ceasing flames of that fiery faced votary of BACCHUS, — Sir ROBERT BOYLE.

Severe as I was, upon the personal charms of this ADONIS, he did not fail

soon to fetch me again to his beloved; who slipped into my hand an answer to CROSBY's epistle, which I soon after delivered to him. He shewed me a part of it, wherein, after the most heart-rending struggles, between duty, love—and horror at the wretch she was destined for; she agrees—if he can find means—to escape from misery to his arms; the only refuge left her, from the tyranny and ill-usage of her barbarous father. He has been some time laying a scheme to get her into his possession, and has at last hit upon one, which he tells her, in a letter I am to deliver this afternoon:—It is, to make an alarm of fire, when all the family are just about got to bed; this, without doubt, will call them up to find out the cause; and while they are all in confusion, and the doors open, he is to steal off HENRIETTA, and convey her into Scotland immediately.

As I think this design cannot fail, I shall not stay to see the event of it, but return

turn in a few days to H . . . ; where, when she is Mrs. CROSBY, I suppose, we shall all have the pleasure of seeing her. It will be some days, I fancy, ere he has obtained leave of absence, and got all things prepared to convey her safely away.

I sincerely wish them success and happiness in their undertaking. I have not yet heard any thing of Mrs. SANDHAM and her lover : her husband makes a sad rout about their being gone, and taxes us all with being assistant to it. I wish it would please Death to pay him a visit, and leave Mrs. SANDHAM at liberty to restore her character, by marrying the youth she is gone off with.

I cannot help still wishing well to that amiable woman : and tho' those who call themselves the virtuous part of the world, may condemn her, yet I never was one of those dragons of chastity, that would give to endless misery all those, who had by chance, and a concurrence of unlucky

circumstances, ventured to stray a little out of the road.

The road of Virtue, is by some called a thorny path. — I never found it so. — It is, I believe, because our sex in general do, that they hate every one who does not undergo equal mortifications with themselves. Aunt PATTY, for instance, is one of those tyrannical virgins, who finding it so hard to remain so, and not having courage, by living otherwise, to stand the tongue of slander, gives to the infernals every young creature, whom in her heart she envies for having dared beyond herself.

Upon my word, I am always uncharitable enough to think, my own sex in general, who are so very severe upon the conduct of others, are, in their hearts, the most abandoned libertines. — Don't condemn me for these sentiments, my dear madam, — tho' I never heard you say it; yet, I think, you, from your experience and knowledge of the human heart, must have
made

made the same observation. I am, my ever
honoured madam,

Your most dutiful and affectionate
EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Mrs. SANDHAM,

To Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

YOU are the only person, my dear
Miss RAVENSWORTH, to whom I
would venture to address myself, after the
step I have so lately taken. And tho', I
am certain, you cannot fail to condemn a
conduct, so very opposite to your own
idea of what a woman's ought to be ; yet,
at the same time, I know your extreme
good sense, and just way of thinking, make
you see every thing in it's true light ; and
that if you ever judge partially, the scale
is balanced by your great good-nature.

Presuming upon this knowledge of your
amiable character, I write, to beg you will
still

still allow me a small share in your esteem, and endeavour to make my dear MARIA have a better opinion of me, than I am sure she has at present : as I know her sentiments upon such a proceeding as mine, are much too rigorous to allow the smallest excuse for me, till, by some means, the veil of prejudice is thrown off, and she regards the thing as it really is.

Consider, my dear Miss RAVENSWORTH, the cruelty of my situation ; married, or rather sacrificed, at sixteen, to a wretch my soul abhorred ; but that misfortune not being sufficient, I was forced to bear from him for three years a continued round of injuries, without a friend or relation in the world to whom I could make known the load of sorrow with which I was oppressed ; as their answer always was, I should oblige him, and not deserve ill treatment ; and they dared believe, I should not find it.

After having for so a long time, with seeming patience and inward agony, bore
all

all those ills, I receive a blow, that near deprives me of life. — Sick, and in the midst of my resentment at the cause of it, I am solicited by a man, (in every respect the reverse of that wretch, to whom, I never more will give the title of husband) the only man, for whom my heart was ever sensible of tenderness; one, whom all the world allows agreeable, and in whom, I think, centers every perfection. — O! my dear Miss EMILY, your heart is not insensible; tell me, how in such circumstances as mine, I could refuse yielding to the instances of a lover, whose persuasive eloquence, I am sure, would have melted a much more flinty disposition than I was ever mistress of. — At least, if all I can alledge in my defence, will not make you think more favourably of my flight, let me appeal to your extreme good-nature, which always excites you to pity, rather than condemn, your sex's failings.

My MARIA, even the amiable MARIA, would never hear my complaints against
Mr.

Mr. SANDHAM; but, I dare say, her motive was a good one — as she thought they availed nothing, since the indissoluble knot was tied, that confirmed me a wretch for life. — A wretch indeed! — for tho' I can find a thousand excuses within myself for what I have done, and tho' I am much happier now, than I have been for three years past, yet do not think, my dear Miss RAVENSWORTH, that I am so lost to reflection, as to be perfectly easy under such ineligible circumstances. No, believe me, I am shocked at the footing on which I live with Mr. OAKHAM; and was the monster, who calls me wife, once dead, I would either be his wife the next day, or he should never see me more.

I would detest the man, who did not love me upon honourable terms. Mr. OAKHAM gives me the greatest reason to believe he does; and I am fully convinced, that as soon as he can retrieve my character, by making me lawfully his, he will,
with

with pleasure, seize the opportunity. If I should be deceived, I hope and trust it will have this good effect, that it will end my misfortunes with my life, which will cease to be valuable to me, when it is no longer so to him, for whom alone I would preserve it. But I am afraid, my dear madam, I shall tire your patience with this dull melancholy scrawl, to which if you vouchsafe an answer, you will indulge your favourite pleasure, by giving satisfaction to the afflicted.

You see the confidence I put in you, by trusting you with the place of my residence, which, I am sure, I need not desire you would keep secret. Adieu, my dear madam ; accept my sincere wishes for your health and happiness, and believe me

Your most obedient humble servant,

FRANCES SANDHAM.

P. S. Direct to me, by the name of Mrs. HARVEY, at Mr. WILSON's in D

LETTER XLIX.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,
To Mrs. CLAYTON.

YOU have with this, my dear MARIA, a letter which I just received from Mrs. SANDHAM. — If you would desire to know my opinion of it, I need say no more, than that I shall answer it, and afford her all the comfort in my power. This, if my MARIA has the regard for me she has always professed, will, I hope, influence her conduct in favour of her unhappy cousin. — I will not write, till I can give her some words of comfort from you.

Endeavour to place her agreeably, and with secrecy, with some friend in whom you can confide; and, I doubt not, but it will be possible to persuade her from her present unhappy connection. Consider, you owe this to the honour of your family, and to the misfortunes of so near a relation :

tion: and if this does not influence you, you owe it to your friendship for me:— And I have vanity enough to believe, that this motive will be sufficient to induce you to a compliance with my request. And now for a word or two about myself.

When I arrived at H..., the whole family gathered about me, rejoicing at my escape.—My grandfather and my dear grandmother shed tears of affection, at having me once more restored to them. I need not tell you, that my eyes overflowed with pleasure, at this proof of their tenderness; and the two amiable girls, CHARLOTTE and NANCY DANVERS, were affected in the same manner.

TOMMY grinned his satisfaction, and beslobbered me for half an hour.—Aunt PAT said, with a look of contempt, She was glad my romantic adventure had ended so much in character:—at the same time casting her eyes, with a supercilious smile, upon Mr. BLANCHE.—Ay, says TOM,
do

do but see naw — I've glad you're come to take your own part, for I thought I should never have kept my eyes i'my head to ha' seen you with, for no' but saying, you was a rare mettled girl; and I loved you better than all 't'family put together — for that you was better worth than any auld maid i'th three kingdoms, thof one of 'em was a queen. — Ifackins, she rose up, and if I had not flew to t'other end ot' room, and got a stick to defend myself, it's my fartin belief she would have spoiled me.

We were all diverted with the young squire, whose joy made him so talkative. Indeed we were all in high spirits. — Our good people approve both DICKY's choice and mine — think then, if we have not reason to continue so. — What did I say? Continue so. — What, continue in good spirits, because I'm in a fair way of procuring myself a tyrant for life? — O no — positively no, — I could not mean any such thing — it was a slip of the pen, which,

as idleness won't suffer me to write my epistle over again, we will let it pass.—But don't imagine, MARIA, that I fancy myself at all happy in such a supposition, for I really don't believe I shall have the wretch at last : — he looks so sure of me too. — Ah NEDDY, NEDDY, — I shall certainly disappoint you after all — I would not have you make yourself too secure. —

By JOVE, 'twas bravely done

First to attempt the chariot of the Sun,

Then fall like PHAETON.

I have a great mind, MARIA — But then gratitude, says my friend — He certainly saved me from a worse tyrant ; that I must confess ; — but Lard, what signifies that — I would chuse still to be obliged to him. — You know the obligation would cease, if I was to repay him so amply, as to bestow my pretty person upon him. — Or suppose we take it this way — Don't you think by rescuing him from as errant a dame Partlet as ever mother Fortune in her mad freaks

VOL. II.

M

formed,

formed, I should make a proper return, for his snatching me from the clumsy paws of that filthy bear lord WILTON. Undoubtedly, you say, EMILY ; for such a little fickle gipsy as you, would break his heart in a twelvemonth's time. — Hold — don't call names tho', MARIA — that is more than I bargained for. — Ah ! if I could be sure the thing would really be polite enough to take himself snugly out of the world at the year's end, — I can't say but for that space of time I might be drawn into the noose. — And yet the mortification of losing so many pretty sensible ingenious adorers, as I have the good fortune to pick up every day ! — It would really be a trying circumstance. — But then I should have that made up to me when I became a widow. — Very true, MARIA. — Well, I'll ask him, and if he really promises to comply with this request of mine, I'll take him by way of penance for my sins.

A gentle

A gentle tap at my door — A lover's tap? No, cousin DICKY. — What does he want? These impertinent men are so troublesome. Ah, thank God, my good couz, I've escaped thee — Peeping at my letter too. — O unparallel'd assurance! — Well, pray read — now I hope you are satisfied? — Wicked girl, he calls me — no matter, I have need of all my wickedness to keep such toads as you in order. — I must go down directly — A curious sight for me to see; no telling before-hand — O Curiosity! thou art swift to enter in the minds of prying women. — I must go with the monster to satisfy the propensity I have to be acquainted with every thing that is going forward. *Attendez mon retour*, MARIA; and as, I suppose, I have by this time conjured up that pretty little spirit of inquisitiveness in you — I will endeavour to lay it as soon as possible.

IN CONTINUATION.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! MARIA, I shall burst with laughing. — Cousin TOMMY —

ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh ! I can't proceed—such a figure ! I must lay down my pen again, and laugh before it will be possible to give you the description — Ha ! ha ! ha !

You know I often told you the youth's propensity to finery. He has purchased a bag-wig—he got it on this morning, and has been viewing himself these two hours, DICKY peeping at him, and called me to see the grimaces he was practising before he descended to breakfast. — But I little imagined, he would make his morning's appearance in it.

Soon after we went down, in he came, dressed in a long night-gown—slippers—a bag-wig, full dressed and powdered—a folitaire, and a sword on, which DICK brought him from London.—Such an original ! — My grandfather's face, and my good grandmother's, were lengthen'd about half an ell.—Tom walked in with the consequence and dignity of a prime minister—stroaked his chin—looked contempt on
little

little folks below, and took his seat.— Silence and surprize, reigned throughout, for some minutes.— I, ready to burſt with laughing, yet not daring to give it vent, leſt it ſhould divert my eyes from the droll object before them—at length, my grandfather ſpoke, without the leaſt inclination to the riſible, I'll aſſure you; his aſtoniſhment was too great for that.

In the name of God, child, ſays he,— how came you dreſſed in ſuch a manner?

How dreſſed, Sir? replied TOM, again ſtroking his chin, and viewing himſelf with a look of ſelf-approbation?

Why, in that prepoſterous manner, ſays my grandmother; why, child, you look like a Merry Andrew.

Ma'am, returned the youth, with an air of conſequential dignity, you can't be thout to underſtand the proper dreſs belonging to a gemman—who have lived ſo long out of the *beaus mund*; but I appeals to couſin DICK and EMMY, whither I is not dreſt in the higheſt taſte of the faſhion?

Cousin DICK and I replied, that his appearance was indeed quite on caricature.

Why there now, says TOM, — did not I tell you as how I was dressed in character?

Our old gentleman, with a look of real concern, declared the boy was mad; — my grand-mother smiled; we young folks burst into immoderate laughter, which TOM thought, was at the ignorance of the old people. — Miss PAT said, with a look of contempt — Puppy — (unfortunate old virgin, she's always drawing herself into some scrape !)

Puppy yourself, retorted the angry squire — you're a puppy, and a jack-ass to boot. In vain, aunt PAT urged him to hold his tongue; 'twas with such contempt her remonstrances were given, that the enraged TOMMY laid his hand upon his sword, swore he would put up with these affronts no longer, and demanded satisfaction: and had not DICKY held his hand, he would certainly have drawn upon her. The
dinner

dinner bell now obliges me to close my narration, with assurances how much I am, my dear MARIA's ever affectionate

EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER L.

Sir ROBERT BOYLE to Lord WILTON.

HELL and the d . . . l, CHARLES ! I shall run distracted — That cursed EMILY ! — S'death and fire — I'm almost choaked with rage, at the bare mention of her name. — But if I'm not revenged, the d . . . l fetch me.

Now, CHARLES — now's thy time. — By heav'n, my rage is so great, that d . . n it, I can't write. — I must lay down my pen, and when I can compose myself enough, to give thee an account of the reason of all this raving, I will again resume it — at present, 'tis impossible.

Well — a bottle of the best Madeira in Britain, has at length put me into such

M 4 spirits,

spirits, that, I think, I may venture to begin once more—in order to inform thee, how I've been abused, cheated, tricked, and robbed.—Damnation—while I tell it, do I live?

Who the d... I would have thought, that little whining jade, Miss SEAGROVE, could have played such a trick? But that confounded EMILY, she was certainly at the bottom of it—for which, if I forgive her, may the vengeance I mean shall fall on her head, light on mine.——

“O woman—woman, damn'd, deceitful woman.—Who was it laid great TROY in ashes?—Woman.—Who for an apple damn'd mankind?—Woman.”—In short, whatever mischief is done in the world, enquire but into the cause, and you'll find woman at the bottom on't.—S'dearth, how I wander!—One glass more, CHARLES, and then to the point.—There—now for it.

When I went t'other day to old Testy's, my wife father-in-law that should have
been ;

been;—instead of finding the family in sober tranquillity, as formerly, all was in disorder and confusion. — The rascal that let me in, started, as if he'd seen some hideous spectre—said not a word, but pointed to the parlour-door. — By heaven, I thought some of them were dead—so made a full stop—and thro' the dread of finding a dead corpse in the room, (than to which, you know, there is nothing I have a greater aversion) I was going to turn back:—when, at that instant, opened the door, and out came old Cholerick, in a long gown and a white night-cap, his eyes upon the full stretch, and mouth wide open. This was enough for me—I was sure it was a ghost—and immediately gave three skips and a jump back;—and had it not been for a d . . n'd tea-table, which was in the passage, and over which I fell neck and heels, I should certainly have been out of the house in the twinkling of an eye. The old man now came up—I gave myself

self over for lost — and was endeavouring, in vain, to recollect a short prayer: till on a nearer view, and touching him, I was convinced it was no shadow, but the same corporeal substance which I parted from the evening before. — How now, Sir ROBERT, says he, what are you in the combination? will you run away from me too? Then seizing me by the arm, which he griped so damned hard, as made me think him mad, he pulled me into the parlour; (I devoutly wishing him, or myself, at the d...l, to be out of his clutches) where, in a corner, drowned in tears, sat his inconsoleable help-mate. — Down he squatted — mute as a fish. — I — staring first at one, then at the other — and really, if my astonishment and fear had not got the better of my risibility, it would have been a most entertaining scene. — At last, I mustered up sufficient courage to stammer out, in a faltering voice, — Pr-a-y, wh-at-s the m-a-tter, Mr. SEA-GR-OV-E?

Rouzed

Rouzed by my voice, (tho' not the most audible) the old man looked up, gave a deep groan, and replied :— Matter !—why, Sir, my daughter's run away with by that villain CROSBY. — He then went on, telling the whole scheme by which he got her away, which, I am sure, took him up two hours. — But as my patience will not allow me so much time at present, I shall only say, that by alarming them with a cry of fire, when just got to bed, in the confusion, my demure help-mate, that was to have been, stole out, and was never missed till morning ; when old SEAGROVE being apprized of it, got up in a d...l of a hurry, and never thinking of altering his dress, was the reason of his making his appearance before me in the manner I have mentioned ; to my no small terror, and the damage of my shins of all the skin from the ankle to the knee, which I unfortunately wiped off, in my fall over the table.

That

That cursed EMILY, what does she not owe me? — I had forgot to tell thee, that she was devilish severe upon me one day, at old SEAGROVE's, where I had carried her, in order, as I find by woeful experience, to weave a halter to hang me with. What she said was so damned smart, that by my soul, I could not answer it as I ought; and therefore contented myself, with thinking on the revenge I would take, when I put her once more into thy power, which, I hope, will now be very soon: for my own ill fortune, in which she had so principal a share, will now spur me on with greater alacrity. — Oh, CHARLES, what a loss to me is twenty thousand pounds, and the addition of all old Square-toes' wealth at his death. — The bare idea distracts me. — Adieu, CHARLES — I can no more at present, but will finish this to-morrow; the power of the Madeira begins to flag, and 'tis now too late to take a second potation. — Once more, adieu, till to-morrow.

IN CONTINUATION.

That ill-toward Miss Fortune, takes a delight, I think, in playing her mad freaks upon me.

I had sent SQUIRES out for these two days past, to get intelligence of EMILY's motions; and this morning arose, big with the hopes of sweet revenge. But on coming down—death to my hopes!—I received a line from him, informing me, that she had been gone to H . . . some days, and that he was on his road thither, to see what he could learn with regard to the present situation of the family.

A sly dog!—He durst as well be d . . . d, as return without a part of his errand.—Just come back, they tell me. Well, send him up.—So, once more Fortune smiles and cheers my drooping spirits, in the person of honest ROBERT, whom your lordship bribed at the masquerade; they have turned him away, and he is now in my service.

It seems, my trusty Pandar met him on the road ; and being formerly slightly acquainted, and knowing the livery he wore to be RAVENSWORTH's, began to sift him about the family — But he had no occasion to use any finesse in the matter — his brother MARTIN told him very willingly his sorrowful case : that on EMILY's going home, she explained the whole affair of the masquerade, and the poor fellow was forced to pack off instantly. — SQUIRES brought him to me, and in consideration that you was the cause of his losing his place, I have taken him.

He tells me, that EMILY, since her return home, frequently takes a walk into the park in an evening alone, and amuses herself with reading in a summer-house at the end of it : the park door, which is very near the summer-house, opens to a wide common, and he has luckily brought away one of the keys belonging to it.

Now,

Now, my lord, boot, and to horse — I think you cannot now fail of getting her again. I have got five trusty rascals, very fit for the purpose, and sent them with ROBERT, who brings you this. — He will instruct you in the proper time to make your attack, and likewise shew you the way; but I would not have you take him to the scene of action, lest his being seen in the neighbourhood by any of the family, should make them suspicious, and by that means put them on their guard: therefore desire you will, as soon as he has given you full instructions, send him back to me, as I shall want him in an affair which I have in hand; and but for which, I would certainly have been with thee, to have shared in the triumph over that Syren, EMILY. — Adieu, CHARLES; success attend thee, prays thy friend and humble servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

L E T T E R L I.

Miss EMILY RAVENSWORTH,
To Mrs. SANDHAM.

WITH this, my dear Mrs. SANDHAM will receive a letter from Mrs. CLAYTON, which I hope, and dare believe, will give her both comfort and satisfaction : for tho' MARIA, by her own irreproachable conduct (God knows to none of the best of husbands) is entitled to be more severe than most women, in such a case as yours — yet, I believe, that very reason, which proceeds from her excellent disposition, is the cause of her being more indulgent to the failings of others, than if she herself was equally in want of the same lenity.

If any case in the world would oblige me to be serious, it is your present unhappy situation ; for though you say, you are happier than you have been these three years ;

years; yet, as you acknowledge your present circumstances to be perfectly ineligible, you will not be offended with me for wishing there was a change in them. — But I beg pardon — I will not trouble you with any serious lecture; in the first place, because I am entirely disqualified for it; and in the next, as I dare say MARIA has given you a *quantum sufficit*, in the inclosed epistle. — To change our subject then.

As I know news to be one of the reigning passions belonging to us busy mortals, especially the males, who, dear souls, go with such an air of consequence to the coffee-houses in a morning, call for the papers, — drink two pennyworth of coffee, to clear their brains from the fumes of last night, and very seldom is the end answered; then settle the affairs of the nation; shake their empty noddles, to express their no meaning, and stickle up for liberty and property; while, perhaps, their dearies

at home, rule like goddesses at large, with despotic sway, and make them too sensible that it's a blessing they are by no means qualified for, and consequently never hope to enjoy.

As such is the case, and that we are equally fond both of hearing and communicating, I will muster up all I can collect, to acquaint you with, and then the conclusion to be drawn from the aforementioned remark is — That we shall both be pleased. May be so ; if you please then we'll try the experiment.

Pour commencer donc par le commencement, we will treat of your ladyship's escape.

In the morning, when you was missing at breakfast, there was a general hue and cry — Servants sent up, to see if you was in bed. — No — A morning's ramble into the park, perhaps? Had you been seen to go out? — No — The street door found wide open, some of your cloaths gone — a suspicious circumstance that. —

No

No walking in the park, with two or three gowns, and a dozen shifts on at a time, as many aprons, &c. a pretty figure you would have been.

Mrs. CLAYTON, with a face as long as my arm, began to apprehend the truth, and was ready to cry. — Her husband, in his usual polite way, (husbands are apt to be polite, you know) called her, a fool, and said, what was it to her if you was gone to the devil? — he knew no business she had to care. — A remark quite in character, for if every friend he had in the world was there, it would give him no concern — The reason of that you'll say is, because in that case he'd be sure of meeting them again: very true, that may, indeed, be some excuse for him.

I endeavoured to comfort your cousin, and told her you would possibly appear at dinner: — but she did not expect it, and consequently was not disappointed,

* In the evening too, your little chimney-sweeper, (for I dare say that has been his

original profession) called with a fat grocer, his intimate acquaintance—one of his pot-companions, I suppose, and asked for his wife, in so peremptory a manner, (thinking the grocer could defend him if any opposition was made) that unfortunately Mr. CLAYTON, who was at home, heard him, and came out; and not being in one of his best humours, (a very common case with him) threatned your ingenious husband with a kicking, if he did not get out of the house—Upon which, like a great blubbering school-boy, he began a crying, and falling on his knees, begged Mr. CLAYTON would let him just speak to his wife for a minute.

MARIA happened to hear this dispute, and coming out, assured him that you was gone nobody knew where. He then asked, If you had taken your cloaths with you? Which he was told was no business of his; but he insisted, he said, upon having them, if you had not taken them away; and that
if

if Mr. CLAYTON did not deliver them, he would bring a constable and fetch 'em. This, as you may well suppose, got him kicked out of the house; and he has since, I hear (having spent all the ready money he had) gone to write for a lisping attorney in Chancery-Lane, with whom he served his clerkship.

What could the beast want with your cloaths? — Possibly he would have trucked them for gin, or some such comfortable potion, when his cash run short. — I hope his infernal majesty will soon take him to himself, and leave you at liberty to clear yourself to the misjudging world, who have indeed treated you too severely: a circumstance, that ought not to surprize you, as they are polite enough not to make much distinction of persons, but lash their neighbours indiscriminately, just as happens to be most convenient; those neighbours still not being so deficient in the rules of good breeding, as not to return the com-

pliment.—Thus does the spirit of politeness go round.

You know CHARLOTTE DANBY.—Next Monday fortnight is fixed for the happy day; happy, for my animal of a cousin DICKY, indeed—but I can't say much on the other side of the question.—They think, I'll lead up one in the dance—a horrid mistake, that of theirs:—don't intend any such thing these ten years, positively.

Miss DANVERS, whom you have likewise seen at Mrs. CLAYTON's, I hope will soon be reconciled to her friends; my good grandmother has undertaken it, and we are all to make a party, and take her with us to her father, when we hope the sight of his daughter, and the intercession of so many, will induce him to forgive her.

Miss SEAGROVE, whom you have heard us so often speak of, is at last gone off to Scotland, with Captain CROSBY. I wonder what the terrible Sir ROBERT will say,

say, to the loss of his intended spouse. Do you think the wretch will cry? If he would shed tears now, as OTHELLO says, "Fast as th' Arabian tree drops its medicinal gums," it might possibly be a means of quenching the flaming phænomenon of his fiery countenance; and then, with the paring off a pound of his unconscionable nose, a person might venture to approach him with some degree of safety.

A pretty contrast between him and your husband; the one flaming like mount *Ætna*; and the other, exactly as if his face was covered with asses-skin—not a bad simile, considering the analogy there is between the two animals.—Heavens! where was the woman within you, when you consented to yoke yourself to such a numscull?—Not one little bit of the spirit of contradiction?—Oh fie, and such a mother to copy by too!

No wonder she does not like a daughter so very different from herself.—Adieu, my

dear Mrs. SANDHAM; I hope, if you ever have it in your power to marry again, you'll manage your husband better, and take example by

Your sincere friend,
EMILY RAVENSWORTH.

LETTER LII.

Mrs. CLAYTON to Mrs. SANDHAM.

IT would be needless, my dear FANNY, to tell you half the vexation your late imprudent step has occasioned me. — You know the sincere love I always bore you, and must be perfectly sensible what my feelings are on such an occasion.

I do not mean to upbraid you, FANNY; but yet give me leave to lay before you the terrible consequences of such a conduct. You have revenged yourself upon yourself; and if the world was doubtful before, this last action must convince them, all that has been already reported is most indisputably true.

Your character lost—the young gentleman, companion of your flight, as well as yourself, entirely ruined—I tremble for you both—How is it possible you can subsist? Both destitute of fortune, and the means of procuring your bread.—What must be the end of your connection?

As I suppose you may want money, inclosed I send you a bill for thirty pounds: 'tis all I have in my power, nor can I be ever of much assistance to you.—You are sensible, my dear FANNY, that was I entire mistress of myself, my house should be a certain and welcome asylum to you; but I am married to a man, whom I think it my duty to oblige, and to whom it would not be agreeable.

Your mother, without a large consideration, will not receive you to her house; and I know of no resource but one: Mrs. COLLINS, whom you have often seen with me, is an agreeable widow lady, a Roman catholic, and is going to France, for the education

education of her children ; she would be glad of a young lady to accompany her ; and as she has no large fortune of her own, and, consequently, lives at no great expence, I think, I can answer for furnishing you with an annual income, sufficient to enable you to live within her prudent plan.

This, my dear, is the utmost extent of my abilities, and what you ought, I think, to accept—I hope, indeed, you will not hesitate a moment. Mr. OAKHAM has it now in his power to be reconciled to his friends, a circumstance which may not be, when a few months has, perhaps, obliterated him from their memories.

If it please heaven to take SANDHAM, and you both continue in the same mind, you will have it then in your powers to be reunited.

In the mean time, you cannot continue such a connection, without the greatest imprudence ; and if you reject my present offer,

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 187

offer, you put it out of my power (whatever are my inclinations) to be of any future service to you, as I cannot, without injuring my own reputation, encourage you, while you pursue such a plan. Consider, my dear girl, on what I have said, and believe me still your most affectionate

MARIA CLAYTON.

L E T T E R LIII.

HENRY CROSBY, Esq;

TO RICHARD RAVENSWORTH, Esq;

AFTER a very harrassing journey of four hundred miles, I have, at length, the unspeakable satisfaction of informing you, that yesterday morning I was made happy, in receiving my HENNY's hand, from a worthy North Briton. The fear of being overtaken, and the fatigue of travelling night and day, have so reduced my charmer's spirits, that she did not relish the beauties of the northern metropolis,
so,

so, after a day's rest, we, this morning, set out on our return for Berwick, a little town on the borders of the Tweed, but neither in England nor Scotland; from whence I write this.

As HENNY is so fatigued, that we cannot pursue our journey with safety, we intend to remain here a few days; but from what I can guess of the town, we shall not be very well entertained; the only amusement they have, being a troop of strolling players, whom they think miracles, I find — at least, if the whole town be of the same opinion with my fat landlord; who, with a very consequential air, abruptly entered the room, soon after we arrived, and excited our curiosity so much, with the praises he very fluently bestowed on them, with all the wit and eloquence of a true BONIFACE, that, tired as we were, we went to see the BEGGARS OPERA: with this previous information from our Host, That they were the most wonder-
fullest

fullest people in Tragedy shows, and the most comicallest in Comedy ones; as an instance of the former, he said, they had almost made his wife miscarry the week before, by cutting off ESSEX's head, as naturable as life; and to prove the latter, he had himself laughed till he had like to have burst his sides, at the humourfome show of HAMLET.

SCARRON, in his excellent novel, has not produced richer food for laughter, than the exhibition and exhibitors mutually afforded. The place, I may presume, had been a malt-kiln; about twenty benches, rising above each other in gradual ascent, with slit-deal seats, were built upon such slender principles of construction, by a carpenter, who dreaded payment of his bill, that every spectator was in momentary danger of being squatted on the ground; the boards were all unplained, and the nails not driven half home, made excellent work for taylors and mantua-makers.

The

The curtain resembled the bed-hangings described by POPE, *and dirty yellow striped with paltry red*; in that part, where you see mottos in the regular theatres, was vilely daubed the words, *Vivitur Ingens*, abominably spelt; and for the benefit of unlearned customers, beneath was scrawled this very significant translation, *We live by our Wits*. In a corner of the pit, sat the most offensive creature that ever scraped cat-gut, who, with great assiduity, tormented our ears incessantly for half an hour, before PEACHUM was presented us; a fellow too vulgar, and too ill-looking for a real thief-taker, who blundered every second line, particularly by saying, instead of six silver-hilted *swords*, six silver-hilted *shirts*. His Rib was worthy of so engaging a mate, a little squab woman, who stared like a stuck pig, waddled like a duck, and screamed worse than a frightened sow in a storm; by a mistake, which might have happened through want
of

of a glass, one cheek was ornamented with red like a milliner's doll, and the other wore the hue of an unbleached candle; she spoke like the goddess of Nonsense, and sung like the eldest daughter of Discord.

POLLY, who would have made an admirable Wapping landlady, wore such a pair of high pin-heeled shoes, that she moved as if a pair of stilts had supplied the place of legs. This occasioned her to topple forward in such a manner, that we were several times under apprehension of her bolting headlong upon us into the pit: this would certainly have happened, if her lover, MACHEATH, had not caught one of her material slips; however, his care produced an incident of much laughter, for having unluckily laid hold of her high raised *tete*, head-dress and all gave way, leaving her own uncombed golden locks, filleted with a dirty red garter, exposed to view. This threw the dear creature into some confusion; but being not very bash-

ful, she replaced her artificial nut-brown covering, and went on with this gentle remark, "Curse that there Fellor of mine, he would make me put on such confounded fashionable shoes, that a body can't walk in them."

This exquisite performer, whose voice and foot kept pace with her delightful appearance, from an exalted opinion of her own musical execution, seemed to have declared war against poor blind Scratch in the corner, who, though his music was sufficient to banish composure from every other mind, often lulled himself asleep; each time he nodded, POLLY, enraged at his want of taste for her singing, put on the face of a fury, stamped like an exercising soldier, and cried out like thunder, "Accompaniment, you, Sir;" here the doleful sounds renewed, while he played one tune, and she sung or bawled another.

LUCY was enacted by an old lady of sixty, who scolded like a Billingsgate, and in

MISS RAVENSWORTH. 191

in her fingering emulated the harmony of winding up a jack or filing a saw ; nature had twisted her shape considerably on one side, and time the universal tooth drawer, having unfurnished the gums, her tongue was inclosed by nose and chin, like a kind of parenthesis. — FILCH's features spoke the pickpocket admirably, but by his dress, looked as if he had been taken from one of the gibbets on Hounslow Heath.

MACHEATH's gang might be justly stiled Dramatic Coffins and Calmucs, for they butchered common sense without the least remorse ; one of this miserable crew to show his idea of character, exhibited his tall awkward figure spread out like a petit maitre.

Among the ladies of easy virtue, there were two or three tolerable faces, and the whole group, particularly POLLY, who represented Slammekin, looked as if

they played similar parts on the great stage of life.

The Captain gave a very whimsical idea, both in look and deportment of one of those miniatures of man a baboon; dressed in an old red jacket: the motion of his legs was rather skipping than walking, that of his hands the flapping of a Bantam cock's wings; the change of his features grinning—his speech chattering, and his songs the gurgling of liquor out of a long necked bottle; however being manager, though worst of the bad, he by right of authority assumed the capital part—a maxim I find mostly maintained by gentry of that stamp.

After the opera, by way of continuing our torment, they kindly gave us an operatical farce—the Devil to Pay! and certainly with respect to action no piece was ever better titled; for the Devil to pay it literally was; the curious performers who in a state of sobriety seemed

as if Nature's journeymen had made them and not well, they imitated humanity so abominably; were now so elevated with gin and strong beer, that such nonsense ensued as beggars all description; and caused me to wish the man on board a man of War, and the woman employed in the more suitable stations of crying oysters or selling gingerbread. — I must have tired your patience, therefore conclude this trifling. I am, &c. &c.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.